

# 1229766

Registered provider: Aurora Care and Education Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A small, private organisation runs this home. The majority of placements are up to 52 weeks and are long term. The home provides some short breaks. The organisation has a school on the grounds. The home is registered to provide accommodation for up to 23 children who have complex support and health needs. These include profound learning difficulties, and sensory and physical impairments.

**Inspection dates:** 23 to 24 May 2017

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 26 September 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Good

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The close work between the staff and families and professionals ensures that the staff understand each child's individual style of communication.
- The manager and staff complete good-quality care plans. These plans are reviewed and updated regularly to show any progress made.
- The home actively promotes and supports contact between the children and their families.
- The manager and staff celebrate the children's achievements. The staff are observant to any change, however small, and celebrate these steps with families and professionals.
- The home works closely with families and professionals to ensure that children have well-planned transitions.
- The children receive consistent monitoring and supervision to ensure their safety.
- Parents say that their children are safe and happy in the home.
- The manager has a clear vision for the home and is passionate about ensuring that progress continues.
- The home is well staffed and resourced to meet the individual needs of the children.

The children's home's areas for development

- A recently admitted child has an autistic spectrum disorder. However, not all of the staff have undertaken specialised training in autism awareness.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2016	Full	Good

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role that they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

This is in particular reference to all staff completing training relating to autism spectrum disorders.

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides long-term residential care, shared care and short breaks for children who have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and sensory impairments. Many of the children have profound complex health needs and are non-verbal. The staff develop their understanding of the children's individual preferred communication styles by working closely with families and professionals. Often, an expression on a child's face is the most successful way to alert the staff to a potential health problem. The children all receive one-to-one support consistently throughout the daytime. This means that the attentive staff are able to recognise and react immediately to the slightest change in a child's presentation.

The home benefits from having specialist staff on-site such as an occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and registered nurses. The specialists work in partnership with all of the staff. The home has strong links with a local children's hospice. The head nurse from the hospice said, 'We have a very good relationship with the home. We are on call to the nurses and they seek advice appropriately. The home is very good at sourcing training for specific health needs. I feel very positive about the staff.'

The manager and staff complete good-quality care plans which are reviewed and updated regularly to show any progress made. This means that staff fully understand the children's individual needs. A social worker said, 'Staff are extremely knowledgeable and really know the children. They stimulate and praise repeatedly. This has boosted [child's] confidence and she is very happy in the placement.' Observations made during this inspection clearly show that the children have trusting and secure relationships with staff. This is shown in the children's broad smiles and giggles in response to the staff.

Parents describe the communication with the home as excellent. The manager monitors case records and provides regular updates to parents and carers. A parent said, 'My child is so happy at the home. The communication is excellent and they [staff] care for him very well.' Another parent said, 'The home works with me, it is a partnership. I feel included. They are honest and transparent in everything that they do.'

All of the children attend the on-site education facility. A member of staff from the home accompanies each of the children throughout the school day. The school and home work together to help the children to achieve their individual education goals. The headteacher said, 'The staff have high expectations of the children. They are observant, praise the children on their achievements and really enjoy seeing them progress. Staff continue to provide educational stimulation in the home by reading to the children in the evening. They observe their expressions to ensure that the child is enjoying the book.'

The home actively supports the children to maintain contact with their families. The home has an open-access policy to family members. The staff support home contact by transporting the children and remaining present if required. Families also have access to on-site cottage accommodation at the home. This enables them to stay and have overnight contact with their children. A parent said, 'They [staff] encourage contact and provide basic provisions so that we can have quality family time when we visit and stay over. My child loves the hydro pool and we go in with him, staff assist with this during our visit. He is starting to make good progress since being at the home. The resources help and I am happy that he is happy.'

The manager and staff celebrate the children's achievements. They are observant to any change, however small, and celebrate these with families and professionals. Recently, a child with a visual impairment was able to focus both eyes on an object. The manager shared this immediately with the parent, who responded, 'Good news! Thank you for always empowering me, I am grateful.' The children enjoy a range of activities in the community such as trips to the cinema, attending village fetes, wildlife parks and walks in the village. The children each have their own book containing photographs of these special moments to share with their families and to keep as memorabilia.

The home is situated in a quiet village and is very much part of the local community. The home arranges visits from the local primary school children. This has led to the local children recognising and interacting with the children when they are out with staff in the community. This encourages the children to socialise and to develop a sense of belonging.

The home works closely with families and professionals to ensure that children have well-planned transitions. The manager completes an assessment of the child's individual needs and considers any impact on existing children prior to admission. The child visits the home several times to familiarise themselves. A parent said, 'It is a very good home. The staff are lovely and very dedicated. My child has made progress. He is happier and he settled very quickly. He is content with staff. They have a gentle approach and constantly encourage and praise him.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

The children receive consistent monitoring and supervision to ensure their safety. The staff are nurturing and attentive in their manner. Individual routines are in place, but the staff are aware that they need to be flexible in their approach. This means that they are able to recognise any immediate actions required relating to health issues and adapt their routines accordingly.

All of the children have detailed moving/handling care plans and personal emergency evacuation plans. These plans ensure that staff are aware of the correct action to take for each child in an emergency situation. The location risk assessment and the general risk assessments are comprehensive and regularly reviewed. The home quickly identifies any potential hazards and is swift to take action.

The staff are required to administer medication to the children and have received appropriate training. Since the last inspection there have been minor mistakes made relating to medication. The manager was proactive in addressing this matter. All relevant professionals and parents were notified. A new system is now in place that reduces the possibility of any further issues occurring. A parent responded, 'All of these checks and balances ensure [child] is well cared for. The professionalism and dedication to her well-being is second to none.'

An advocate from Voice Ability visits the children every month. The children are able to show their feelings through body language and facial expressions. This ensures that the children have an opportunity to make their views known to an independent person.

The home has good links with the designated officer, who said, 'I am happy with the home. The staff seek appropriate advice. They follow procedures and are transparent in their practice.' No significant safeguarding incidents have occurred in the home. All of the staff have received mandatory safeguarding training. Staff spoken with during the inspection have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow and recognise that they have a duty to safeguard children.

Parents spoken with during the inspection report that their children are safe and happy in the home. They know this by watching their child's response to staff and witnessing the trusting relationships that have developed. A parent said, 'I have absolute confidence in the staff.' Professionals are complimentary and say that the staff are fully committed and dedicated. A social worker said, 'This home provides the right care.'

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager has a number of years' experience in this sector and is suitably qualified. She has a clear vision for the home and is passionate about ensuring that progress continues. Staff say, 'The manager is the strength of the home, she doesn't miss a thing and she provides very strong leadership.' Since the last inspection, there have been significant additions to the staff team. The manager has been successful throughout this period in maintaining good staff morale. This has resulted in the children continuing to receive consistent good care.

The manager feels well supported by the provider and receives regular, good-quality supervision. Staff supervision is of good quality, with discussions in relation to the children, safeguarding, reflective practice, personal development and training needs. This means that staff are well equipped to care for the children safely.

At the previous inspection, a recommendation was made relating to inconsistencies in recording. The manager has introduced a new training programme to ensure that all of the staff understand the importance of accurate record keeping. Staff have followed this

guidance well and all records checked at this inspection are very detailed and of a high standard.

The independent visitor provides well-considered reports that give clear direction and suggest areas requiring improvements. The manager embraces positive change and works well with the independent visitor to ensure that the children receive a high-quality service and that the service development is continuous.

The home is well staffed and resourced. The staff are suitably qualified and have completed mandatory training. A recently admitted child has an autistic spectrum disorder. However, not all of the staff have undertaken specialised training in working with children who have an autistic spectrum disorder. This does not give the staff the understanding that they need to work as effectively as possible with this child.

The manager and staff team know the children well. They are committed to improving outcomes for the children. For many of the children, they have made such good progress that they can now attend school. The manager has achieved this by actively challenging health professionals about medication requirements. For example, one of the children did not respond well to their medication, resulting in them constantly being tired. The manager persisted in finding a solution. After several discussions with health professionals, the medication was changed. The child now has increased energy levels and is able to enjoy their day.

The home provides a safe physical environment for the children. All of the children have personalised bedrooms with family photographs on their walls. The staff are very aware of the ethos of the home, which is to provide a safe, caring and nurturing environment which reflects a family situation. The staff are providing this effectively and they continue to offer a wide range of experiences which encourage the children to make choices and progress.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1229766

**Provision sub-type:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** Aurora Care and Education Limited

**Registered provider address:** 33 Holborn, London EC1N 2HT

**Responsible individual:** Fiona Voysey

**Registered manager:** Emma Nelson

## Inspector

Lynne Drage, social care inspector

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