

1229766

Registered provider: Aurora Care and Education Opco Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to 29 children with complex needs, including autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, profound learning difficulties and/or sensory and/or physical impairments. Most children attend the on-site school. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision.

The registered manager left on 23 February 2022. An interim manager is in place and is in the process of applying for registration with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/11/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/05/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/12/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This inspection was conducted following a complaint raised with Ofsted. The areas of concern were looked at during this inspection.

Five children have moved on from the home since the last inspection. There are currently 24 children living at the home. Children have positive experiences and are supported with good-quality individualised care that enhances their future opportunities and well-being.

The staff build strong relationships with children. Alternative communication aids are used purposefully and to good effect. Interactions between the children and staff are filled with high mutual regard and warmth. As a result, the children develop a sense of security and greatly improve their social and self-expression skills.

Activities are well organised and provide a range of opportunities to extend children's learning, skills and interests. Children have been able to take part in a community celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and some children have recently enjoyed an overseas trip to a theme park in France. A wide range of sensory-based activities are available at the home, including access to an on-site hydrotherapy pool. This variety of meaningful activities greatly enriches children's overall experiences.

The staff team provides a holistic approach to the children's care. Children benefit from the support of a range of professionals, including nurses and occupational and speech and language therapists. The staff follow clear and well-devised health plans to ensure that children's complex health needs are met.

Children are progressing well in their education. Staff support children's education targets and maintain children's learning experiences at the home. Staff ensure that consistent morning routines are adhered to. As a result, children's attendance and progress at school improve from their starting points.

The accommodation is spacious and fully equipped to meet children's individual needs. The children benefit from high-quality play equipment and thoughtful individual spaces that meet their recreational interests. Children's bedrooms are creatively personalised. However, paint across several bath panels and doors has been damaged in one of the flat lodgings. This detracts from what is otherwise a consistently well-decorated and nurturing environment.

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

The staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They receive training in safeguarding disabled children and are aware of the children's additional

vulnerabilities. When safeguarding concerns arise, they are dealt with promptly, transparently and effectively by the management team.

The staff have good awareness of children's individual missing-from-home procedures. A recent reconfiguration of one flat lodging has meant that stronger security measures have been maintained. Consequently, no incidents of children going missing from the home have occurred since the last inspection.

Staff use clear and informative behaviour management plans. The plans help the staff to identify the potential triggers for children's anxiety and understand how to manage children's behaviours in a helpful way.

The management team has recently improved monitoring checks in response to concerns from individual staff members at night. This has resulted in increased oversight of safe care during this time and has provided more effective safeguards for children.

The staff use physical interventions rarely. However, on the one occasion these interventions were used since the last inspection, a corresponding record was not completed. The lack of a clear record has meant that the type, duration and circumstances around the use of the hold are unclear. This also meant that debriefs for the child and the staff were delayed and the manager's review of the proportionality of the intervention was hindered.

Safe recruitment processes for full-time staff are thorough. A suitable system is in place to check recruitment records for agency staff when they are used. However, in one instance, one piece of information around employment history was not gained prior to one agency worker's deployment at the home. This means that not all information regarding the staff member's suitability was assessed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager left the home in February 2022. A new, qualified manager has been appointed and is in the process of registering with Ofsted. The manager, alongside the senior leadership team, oversees the care across five flat lodgings. Clear lines of responsibility and line management are in place, and several strengths are apparent in the leadership and management of the home. However, shortfalls have been identified which, if left unaddressed, have the potential to undermine children's experiences and progress.

The home continues to have a high staffing turnover. Managers maintain an ambitious recruitment drive and regularly review strategies to address negative trends. However, actions have not been effective and staff shortages have remained. Consequently, there have been occasions when two-to-one staffing ratios have not been met as agreed with children's placing authorities.

Managers have a high reliance on agency staff to cover staffing gaps. Although a good proportion of these staff are consistent, a small cohort do not provide suitable continuity for children's care.

External monitoring needs improvement. The independent person fails to consult regularly with families. The independent person's evaluation of safeguarding arrangements has been unclear on two occasions since the last inspection. Some report submissions to Ofsted have been delayed beyond reasonable timescales. This reduces the overall quality and assurances that are intended by these visits.

Managerial monitoring has not identified a gap in one child's plan in relation to their mental health needs. A risk assessment for one child has not been reviewed within timescales and one-to-one discussions with a child have not been responded to by a manager for some time. Furthermore, records of some fire drills were missing at the time of the inspection. These issues have not led to increased risk for children but have the potential to do so if left unchecked.

Many parents provided good feedback about the quality of care and the positive difference that the staff's support makes to their children's lives. However, one parent spoke of a breakdown in effective communication with managers and between professionals involved in their child's move on from the home. This lack of communication was cited as not being as effective as it could be during this important time in the child's life.

Staff benefit from regular child-centred staff meetings. Staff, including agency staff, now receive reflective and comprehensive supervisions. This ensures that good support for staff is available to develop their practice.

The well-developed training programme equips staff with the skills to meet the children's individual needs. This has been enhanced since the last inspection.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(e))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children are supervised by the number of staff agreed between the home and the placing authority.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	5 August 2022
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p>	5 August 2022

<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	<p>29 July 2022</p>
<p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as</p>	<p>5 August 2022</p>

<p>the independent person requires.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (2)(a) (4)(a)(b))</p>	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is decorated to a consistently high standard throughout the accommodation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should develop effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons. In particular, ensure that communication remains consistent and effective throughout children's experience of moving on from the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice that safeguards children. In particular, ensure that monitoring of all schedule 2 checks for agency staff is completed prior to their deployment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: Children's home

Registered provider: Aurora Care and Education Opco Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 13, Twigworth Court Business Centre,
Tewkesbury Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 9PG

Responsible individual: Philip Jonas

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector
Mandy Start, Social Care Inspector

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