

# 1241263

Registered provider: Aspire Care and Education Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for up to seven children with autism spectrum disorder and/or have learning difficulties together with speech, language and communication needs.

**Inspection dates: 14 to 15 September 2021**

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, Ofsted suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 24 February 2020.

**Date of last inspection:** 11 December 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 11/12/2019      | Full            | Outstanding            |
| 30/10/2018      | Full            | Outstanding            |
| 16/01/2018      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

The staff take exceptional steps to meet the individual needs of the children. For one child, structural changes have been made to his personal space to increase his sense of security. For another, the premises have been reorganised to provide him with his own calm and controlled personalised space. These measures make the children feel safer, more able to engage with others, to learn and to take critical steps towards greater independence.

The staff strive to connect with the inner worlds of the children. Staff are determined and use all available means to increase levels of communication for the children. Their approach for each child is highly individualised and all progress is celebrated. The children become more able to express their views, wishes and feelings and to make choices for themselves.

The staff have established a strong network of external agencies and professionals who add to their understanding of the children and how to best meet their needs. They also work closely with children's families whenever possible. This expansive approach to the children's care ensures that staff have an in-depth, well-informed assessment of the children's needs and draw on a range of resources to help children reach their full potential.

The sense of stability and security that the children develop and the positive relationships they build with staff give them confidence in leaving the home to attend their education. Most do this happily and are equally happy to return. This connection with the school and the wider community helps them to learn and increases their chances for the future.

When children are not making expected progress or display unhelpful patterns of behaviour, staff are attentive and know how to support them. Staff use specialised ways to analyse and understand what might underpin the children's behaviours and develop strategies to overcome obstacles that slow progress or undermine well-being. This helps the children to feel valued and improves their daily experience and progress.

A strong focus on indoor and outdoor games and activities and fun events provides the children with a sense of enjoyment and positive memories. This is reinforced in the home through the display of photographs as well as by making video recordings. This adds to the children's sense of community and affirms good staff practice.

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

Good staffing levels, a highly child-focused approach to care and excellent teamwork ensure that the children always receive high levels of support and supervision both inside and outside the home. This keeps them safe and helps them to feel secure.

Each child has a plan in place that routinely considers any form of restriction being employed to increase their safety or reduce harm, and how these can be reduced or removed. This includes things such as the removal of protective screens from personal television sets and reducing the necessary level of harnessing for car travel. One child has been assessed as not benefiting from physical restraint and other methods are used to protect him from self-injurious behaviours. This has resulted in a more positive experience of care for this child. This ensures that physical restraint is only used as a last resort when it is absolutely necessary to prevent harm.

On occasion, staff have to manage a child away from other children for their safety, and use a specially designed bed that restricts their liberty for periods of time. This use of restrictive measures is monitored very closely by leaders and managers, and practice is shared with outside professionals and placing authorities. For this child, extensive steps have been taken to ensure his safety and comfort during the periods that he is not allowed to mix with other children and for him to see this positively as a form of self-regulation. This highly controlled intervention with enhanced staffing levels has helped him to make significant progress in recent months. He has re-engaged with learning and is again participating in outdoor activities with his peers.

Any use of physical restrictive measures triggers immediate inquiry into why this became necessary, how it could have been avoided and what strategies need to be applied to avoid this approach being repeated. The meticulous recording and oversight of incidents reveal a very caring and sensitive staff team, who only wish for the children's best possible care experience.

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

High-calibre leaders and managers run this home with passion and ambition for the children. They are calm and confident and lead by example. They enjoy the respect of the staff team, who speak widely of the strong and meaningful support that they receive as well as the positive approach to their professional development.

Leaders have instilled a whole-child culture of care in the home that is focused on the inner world of the child, and gaining their wishes, views and feelings is paramount.

The monitoring of the children's care and progress is maintained to a high standard and increasing use is being made of statistical data to identify trends and patterns relevant to the care and progress of the children. The analytical approach to monitoring enables a targeted approach to improvement and maximises benefits to the children. The managers' keen oversight of the quality of care provided to

children ensures continued improvements to the service, informed by an understanding of how children experience care.

Being confident that the quality of care that they deliver is good does not satisfy leaders and managers. They are continuously looking at ways to improve the service as a whole and how individual children's care can be improved. They are creative in the way they do this and make routine use of practice-related literature to inform developments. They also make use of the expertise of allied professionals, such as occupational therapists and speech, language and communication therapists, to inform practice and improvement.

Leaders and managers engender respect from external agencies and professionals. They are regularly invited to contribute to external conferences and events to share their expertise with other practitioners. They are generous in sharing their knowledge and approaches to practice and collaborate freely and effectively with outside agencies to enhance their care of the children. This enriches practice and contributes to the children's quality of care.

The recruitment, selection and induction of permanent staff are carried out to a high standard and recently appointed staff talk about this process in a very positive way. They report that they had accurate expectations when starting in the role and that they were well supported in their induction. This careful approach to staff recruitment and training promotes staff retention and contributes to stability for the children.

A shortfall was identified in the use of agency workers in the home. This relates to ensuring that qualification requirements are met and to ascertaining the reasons for leaving a previous care role involving children or vulnerable adults. There was, however, no identifiable immediate risk to the children as a result of this omission and the manager took immediate action to rectify the shortfall.

Staff's conduct and performance are closely monitored, and immediate formal action is taken when this is not in accordance with expectations. This helps to maintain high standards of staff practice in the care of the children.

This provider successfully met the changing demands and restrictions imposed by the pandemic and was able to maintain stability for the children. They were even able to expand their capacity to accommodate an additional child whose placement had broken down for pandemic reasons.

## 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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.<br/>(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> | 31 October 2021 |

## 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:** 1241263

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Aspire Care and Education Services Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Rift House, Eureka Park, Upper Pemberton,  
Kennington, Ashford, Kent TN25 4AZ

**Responsible individual:** Jonathan Deslandes

**Registered manager:** Maria Wells

### Inspector:

John Pledger, Social Care Inspector

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