

1244108

Registered provider: Bay Tree House (Gravesend) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children. The home's statement of purpose states that it provides therapeutic care for children with learning needs, language and communication difficulties and/or autism spectrum disorder. Three children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The post for a registered manager has been vacant since 23 October 2023.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 May 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2024	Full	Inadequate
10/01/2023	Full	Good
18/05/2021	Full	Good
12/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy warm and trusting relationships with staff. They are encouraged to express their views, and staff are responsive to them. For example, where children have spoken about having difficulties sleeping, advice and support have been sought from medical professionals to inform strategies to help them.

Staff are guided to provide good-quality care by plans that are well written, relevant and regularly reviewed. Managers are working to further enhance these and ensure that the information supports children when they move on from the home.

No children have left the home since the last inspection. However, when children are due to leave the home, they are supported by staff who work with other professionals, such as social workers and education colleagues, to ensure that children's views are heard and considered. They help children to navigate their own worries and provide reassurance that enables them to think positively about their futures.

Children enjoy a range of activities that enable them to develop their independence and social skills, such as shopping trips, visiting parks and cinemas, as well as activities that support a healthy lifestyle, such as swimming and cycling. They are also encouraged to pursue their own hobbies and interests.

Children are supported to spend time with their family where appropriate. This is managed sensitively by staff, who show care and respect by preparing children well and giving them as much autonomy as possible in arranging activities or supporting them to explore any difficult feelings they may have.

Children attend education regularly and attendance continues to improve. Education colleagues recognise the impact that staff have had on supporting one child's educational attainment with their reading and writing skills.

Children are making progress in relation to their individual starting points. For one child, they are more confident and safer in the community, learning how to cross the road themselves with less support. Other children are cooking meals for themselves and keeping their bedrooms tidy.

Staff have good relationships with children's families and other professionals, such as social workers. They work together to support children, focusing on their needs and enabling them to participate in making decisions about their lives.

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

Staff support children to talk about how they are feeling and explore their own thoughts. They also work with appropriate agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health

services, to ensure that children get the care and support that they need to maintain good emotional well-being. As a result, there have been no incidents of self-injurious behaviours.

Children receive the support and care that they need to feel settled in the home. As a result, there have been no incidents of children going missing.

Managers have ensured that the home is now compliant with relevant health and safety guidance and have addressed all actions that were raised at the last inspection.

Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children. When concerns arise, the actions they take are appropriate and ensure that children are kept safe from harm. However, on one occasion, staff did not act in a timely way in sharing information about an incident with managers, although this delay did not have an impact on any children. Appropriate referrals were then made to agencies such as the local authority designated officer about the incident, including the delay. However, managers have not clearly evidenced taking appropriate action to address shortfalls in staff practice.

Incidents are rare and continue to reduce. The actions taken by staff are appropriate in supporting children to explore difficult feelings in a caring way. However, the language used in reports does not always reflect the child-focused care that staff deliver in practice.

There are areas of historic employment practices that have not met requirements and the home is working diligently to address these retrospectively. For staff who have joined most recently, there is good evidence that processes now align with safer recruitment principles.

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

Staff benefit from a range of training that helps them to feel more confident in the role they carry out. However, there are staff who have not received essential training to enable them to manage difficult behaviours, and no clear plan has been devised to address this shortfall.

Where managers identify concerns regarding staff practice, they are supportive of staff and give them opportunities to improve. However, there are occasions where concerns around practice have not been challenged or evidenced effectively. Where there have been opportunities to reflect on concerns, managers have not explored these with staff to help them adapt and improve practices.

Staff benefit from regular supervision sessions and appraisals. These have improved recently, and staff feel that the process is supportive. However, the records could be enhanced through evidencing greater reflection and using opportunities to improve practice.

Managers have worked to provide children with a nurturing environment that supports their needs. However, there are areas in need of repair, which detracts from the homeliness, and they have not been addressed in a timely way. There are clear plans in place to resolve these.

Managers make good use of monitoring systems that they have developed since the last inspection, to help guide them to develop the home. They have worked hard to address the previously identified requirements and to plan for the future. It is clear that this has been a considerable undertaking. Managers are new to their roles and are passionate about effecting positive change in the home. They have yet to apply to register with Ofsted.

Children's views are important to managers, and these are carefully considered. Clear actions are taken in response to any areas of concern raised. For example, around one child's future placement, managers have worked with social workers to try and identify areas where the child wants to live in. For another child, managers have worked with professionals to address health needs in relation to getting support to aid good sleep.

Managers have developed good relationships with professionals such as social workers, health colleagues and education staff. Where managers identify areas for improvement, they challenge professionals appropriately to ensure that information is shared and that children get the support they need from other services.

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, The 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff report concerns without delay.	1 July 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all staff receive relevant training that enables them to support children effectively.	1 July 2024
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	1 July 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1244108

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bay Tree House (Gravesend) Limited

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jay Shekleton, Social Care Inspector
Sonata Brisley, Social Care Inspector

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