

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 privately owned home provides care for up to three children. The home's statement of purpose states that it provides holistic and therapeutic care for children with learning needs, language and communication difficulties, and/or autism spectrum disorders.

An acting manager has been in post since October 2022 and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 18 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/05/2021	Full	Good
12/06/2019	Full	Good
15/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have long and stable placements at the home. Staff understand children's journeys, and this is central to care planning. Staff invest time in helping children to develop their social and emotional skills. As a result, children are making significant progress.

Staff involve children in decisions and care planning. Children personalise their rooms, which reflect their interests. Children have specific interests and staff help children to balance these with other activities. Staff involve children in the reviewing of their care plans, with children's views and wishes at the centre of these plans.

Staff prioritise education. All children attend education, and some travel long distances so that they can attend their preferred school. Children make good progress at school. Staff help children with their education at home. For example, one child's literacy skills have improved as a staff member regularly helps him to practise these skills at home.

Children are developing skills for adulthood. Staff involve children in meal planning, and each child chooses and prepares a meal for everyone. Children undertake household chores and do their laundry. Professionals say that children have progressed significantly with these skills. Staff reward children and celebrate these achievements.

Managers and staff ensure that when children move in to and out of the home, this is well planned. The manager undertakes detailed and thoughtful assessments of a child before they move in. The manager involves the child's family and education staff. The children meet each other and spend time together before living together. Staff prepare children who are moving out with careful long-term planning.

Children lead an active life. Children undertake swimming lessons and go bike riding with staff. They also go on trips in the UK and abroad.

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

Staff understand the vulnerabilities of the children. Risk assessments are detailed and regularly reviewed. Staff are child focused and knowledgeable.

Staff keep children safe when they go online. Staff use parental controls and regular checks to manage devices. Staff have regular conversations with children to help them to stay safe. Staff have created an open culture with children to discuss things that they find online.

Staff embrace a therapeutic approach to helping children. Staff use conversations to explore children's feelings. Physical intervention is not used regularly, and

consequences are only used occasionally. Staff use reward charts to encourage children to understand the rules in the home. The home's policy is to report children to the police following incidents. This is to inform the police of the incidents and any criminal damage caused, rather than to manage the children's behaviour. No children have been criminalised because of this practice. However, this does not align with the therapeutic approach used in the home.

Relationships between children are managed well. Staff act on concerns about children's relationships. Managers involve external agencies and have open discussions with children about their concerns. Staff talk to children about healthy relationships. Staff explore topics such as sexuality with children and help them to understand their feelings.

Staff use resources to help children to understand each other's differences. Staff have conversations with children about bullying. Staff challenge children when they make racist remarks. Staff encourage children to have curiosity about diverse cultures and discuss this openly.

Medication errors have been managed well by managers, and learning has been taken from these incidents. Staff know how to respond to medication errors. Record-keeping is good, and regular medication audits take place. However, the audits did not identify one expired over the counter medication, which was found during the inspection, and that over the counter medications are not labelled for each individual child. This was rectified and resolved during the inspection and did not impact on children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A manager has been appointed and her application has been submitted. The manager has worked at the home previously in a leadership role.

The manager understands the progress made by the children in the home. The manager uses surveys to identify trends and patterns with children's well-being and happiness. The manager shares the results with social care professionals to track the children's progress.

Staff feel well supported. They receive regular supervision and training, which helps them in their roles. New staff are supported with effective inductions. Staff say that they enjoy working at the home.

Parents and professionals are complimentary about the impact that staff have on children. Communication with other professionals is effective. Professionals say that the relationships with staff are fantastic, and that they work in partnership with managers. Managers challenge professionals when children are not receiving a good service.

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and regularly seeks the views of professionals and parents to inform plans for future development.

The manager has already made some positive changes to practice and recording systems.

Children's bedrooms are decorated to their own personal taste and interests. However, some areas of the home require attention. Two bedroom windows have a small amount of mould forming on them, the lounge has a damaged television that is held together with parcel tape, and there is a damaged canvas picture on the wall. There is also a window with a cracked pane of glass in the staff sleep in room. These deficiencies detract from otherwise welcoming and homely environment.

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
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(a) (2)(d))	13 February 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that medication expiry dates are checked, and expired medication is disposed of. The registered person should also ensure that medications are stored in a way that is clear which over the counter medications belong to each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should agree with their local police force procedures and guidance on police involvement with the home to reduce unnecessary police involvement in managing behaviour and the criminalisation of behaviours. This agreement should be reviewed and included in the home's behaviour management policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.40)

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: David Lewis

Registered manager: Bethany Allen-Terry

Inspector

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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