

1271222

Registered provider: GS Social Care Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to five children who may have been diagnosed with a learning disability and/or physical disability. At the time of the inspection, five children were living in the home. Four of them met with the inspector and shared their experiences of living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 3 August 2020.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this children's home to carry out a monitoring visit on 3 February 2021. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 March 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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.

Date of last inspection: 3 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/06/2019	Full	Good
19/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children like living in the home. They receive outstanding care from staff who prioritise their well-being. This care helps them to make exceptional progress in all areas of their lives. Staff care about children. They regularly go above and beyond to ensure their individual and group needs are being met. One child said, 'I love it here, it's brilliant, it's my home.'

Staff know the children. They are in tune with their individual communication styles and work closely with speech and language services to develop children's communication skills. One child who previously had limited verbal communication no longer needs communication aids to be understood.

Children's complex learning disabilities and health needs are well understood. The team is vigilant and responsive to changes and seeks specialist support as required. One health professional said, 'They are outstanding. I have never known a residential placement that cares about the children as much as they do. They know the children's needs down to fine details. They are just on the ball with everything. I really can't fault them at all.'

The team benefits from regular consultations with the organisation's learning disability nurse. Using research-informed practice, she works with the team to develop strategies to support children. She also works directly with children. One child was helped to adjust to having a feeding tube fitted when his favourite toy also appeared to have had the same procedure.

Children are regularly consulted. Their views influence their day-to-day care. One child helped to create a communication tool for visitors and another child is involved in peer mentoring and campaigning for disability rights. The creation of a dignity champion in the home ensures everyone is treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Children's learning is well supported. Children are helped to access education and their achievements are celebrated. Any issues are swiftly addressed, and staff are not afraid to appropriately challenge other services to ensure children's needs are being met. The introduction of the i-can programme in the home helps children to learn key skills to develop their confidence and independence.

Through attending a range of fun and fulfilling activities and events, children are able to develop their social networks and increase their confidence and self-esteem. For some children, this has meant breaking down barriers and challenging organisations to improve accessibility for themselves and others. Children are also encouraged to participate in fun events to raise awareness and understanding of different medical conditions, and cultures and faiths.

Family relationships are nurtured and encouraged. This means children benefit from stronger family relationships that will remain available to them into adulthood. Family members are highly positive about the care provided. One family member said, 'We are really happy with the care and could not ask for a better place for [name of child].'

The layout of the home has been used creatively to provide children with a spacious yet homely environment that is well furnished and decorated in accordance with their sensory needs. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of belonging in the home. Their photos are displayed throughout, and their bedrooms are decorated and personalised to reflect their personalities and interests.

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

Children say they feel safe and happy living in the home. Their safety and well-being are at the centre of staff's practice. One social worker said, '[Name of child] is doing wonders at the home. He has come along really, really well and we feel he is safe there. I don't have any worries at all, which given his complex needs speaks volumes.'

Staff have an excellent understanding of children's vulnerabilities and risks. They recognise patterns and indicators in children's behaviours and are able to adapt strategies and routines to support them. One child's mealtimes have recently been altered as he became over-stimulated when eating with other children. This small change means he is now able to enjoy his mealtimes without becoming distressed. Another child was struggling with group-living dynamics and has benefited from the creation of a separate annex. He is now thriving in his own self-contained space and has regular contact with the other children.

Using a range of communication methods, children are able to explore issues that are affecting them. Some children are helped to further develop their understanding through accessible training courses, for example, a safer surfing course exploring online safety.

Children require high levels of supervision, monitoring and support. Staffing levels in the home reflect these needs. Risk management plans clearly identify the use of monitoring equipment to keep children safe.

Children's plans are individualised and regularly updated. They include strategies for staff to follow. Staff are able to de-escalate situations effectively and distract children from becoming over-stimulated or overly anxious. This reduces the number of incidents in the home. Staff rarely need to hold children to keep them safe and only do this as a last resort. Following all incidents, children and staff are involved in reflective discussions.

Safeguarding practices are well understood. Allegations, complaints and concerns are dealt with appropriately in line with the organisation's safeguarding policies.

Staff are suitably trained in the safe administration of medication. When there have been errors in the administration of medication, these have not compromised children's health. The manager conducts thorough management investigations to identify any learning following incidents and to strengthen practice in the home.

The manager has addressed recording discrepancies identified during the inspection. She has also taken swift action to resolve issues identified with a fire door which compromised compliance with fire regulations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There has been a change in manager since the last inspection. The current manager is suitably skilled, experienced and holds the relevant qualification. The team benefits from her clear leadership and guidance. She is child-centred, inspirational and has high expectations of staff. The manager uses internal and external monitoring systems to maintain oversight of the home and to identify plans for further development.

The manager is supported by the responsible individual, a newly appointed assistant manager and three senior residential childcare workers. Together, they have developed a culture that is focused on providing the best possible care, experiences and futures for children. Professionals and family members speak highly of the management team and the depth and breadth of knowledge that the staff have regarding individual children and their plans.

Communication with partner agencies and families is a key strength in the home. Families, health professionals and placing authorities are regularly kept updated about the progress children make.

There have been a number of staffing changes across the team, but the manager has remained focused on keeping the impact on children to a minimum. New staff are gradually introduced to children, enabling them to build relationships at the child's pace. Following effective recruitment, the need to use agency staff has significantly reduced and only named agency staff are used to cover shortfalls if required.

The team is strong, stable and diverse. They have a range of experience and complement each other's strengths. Staff work consistently to deliver exceptional care to children. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working in the home. They say they feel supported and are proud of the work they do. Staff have access to a robust induction programme and regular practice-based supervisions. Team meetings provide further learning and staff have access to a range of training opportunities to meet the needs of the children in their care.

The manager is committed to continuously improving the service. She regularly seeks feedback from children, families and professionals to further develop practice and improve outcomes and experiences for children.

The requirements made at the monitoring visit and previous inspection have been met.

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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that all the fire doors are compliant with the regulation.	29 April 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff clearly record information in a way that maintains a child's confidentiality and is not open to misinterpretation.
(‘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: 1271222

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: GS Social Care Solutions Limited

Responsible individual: Faye Mellor

Registered manager: Rowena Hawcroft

Inspector

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector

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