

2594218

Registered provider: Gordon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to four children with learning disabilities or social and/or emotional difficulties. The home's statement of purpose clearly states that the home will only admit children with a similar level of need as the children currently living at the home.

This home was registered with Ofsted in September 2020. The manager was registered at the same time.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

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

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 July 2021

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Parents and professionals praise the significant progress children are making. A child said there was nothing which could be better for them. A parent confirmed that they were happy with the improvement in their child. A nurse reiterated that one child had 'really progressed'.

Children make progress with their communication, self-confidence and self-determination, which enables them to make meaningful choices in their daily lives. Children also influence wider issues at the children's home, for example, staff recruitment.

When new children move into the home, they quickly settle and develop trusting relationships with staff. It can often be traumatising for children when they move into the home in an emergency, however, staff work hard to nurture children and give them a sense of belonging.

Care planning identifies each child's support needs and the desired outcomes for them. Support plans are written in the child's voice and they provide a good summary of children's personal preferences. Staff concentrate on children's ability and not their disability.

Children's goals focus on helping them to lead a more independent and fulfilling life. Children develop their independent living skills, including taking responsibility for their personal care, cleaning and their laundry. Additionally, children learn to cook, bake, budget and travel on public transport.

Staff strongly advocate for children to receive the necessary support in order to reach their full potential. Examples of this include referrals for speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. Children also benefit from expert support from a behavioural therapist and a psychiatrist.

Staff value children's education and, when necessary, children receive support to re-engage in the school system. For some children, this is significant due to their personal history of not attending school. School attendance has increased, and one child was supported to complete mock examinations and a vocational qualification.

Throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, children have enjoyed taking part in activities they like, such as sightseeing drives through London and going to the water park. Children also enjoy trips further afield, for example to the seaside. Staff are currently planning individualised holidays for children, in England and to Jamaica.

Children enjoy relaxing in the sensory room and the outdoor hot tub. They are also able to exercise in the home on the trampoline or using the equipment in the gym. Children also have access to in-house music therapy.

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

Children respond well to the nurturing and individualised care provided by staff. There has been a reduction in children's anxieties, self-harmful behaviour, harming others and socially unacceptable behaviour. Children also learn personal development skills, such as social awareness and patience.

Staff work effectively with children who have experienced trauma. A therapist reported, 'This is the right place,' for a particular child. A social worker commended the staff team's 'good knowledge of needs and triggers'.

Staff receive ongoing specialist training in positive behavioural strategies. This training provides them with the confidence to support children with complex needs. This has contributed to improved emotional well-being and a significant reduction in incidents for one child.

Staff have a good understanding of how each child communicates through their behaviour. Staff focus on de-escalation and enhancing children's emotional well-being. The risks to each child are reviewed on a regular basis and there are no current issues with children going missing from the home.

Partnership working in the local authority focuses on having a clear strategy to safeguard children and meet their needs. There is a good understanding of deprivation of liberty legislation and the need to keep children safe. Staff receive safeguarding training and they know how to respond to allegations.

Staff rarely use sanctions; they prefer to reward children's achievements. Occasionally, staff physically intervene to protect children from causing harm to themselves or others. During the inspection, a psychiatrist observed a restraint and commented that it was managed 'really well, given the amount of aggression'.

Managers undertake debriefs with staff following each incident of restraint. The deputy manager reported that these are usually undertaken on the same day as the incident. However, records do not include the date of the debrief. Therefore, it is unclear if debriefs are completed within the required 48-hour timescale.

There are shortfalls in staff recruitment practice. For example, one staff recruitment file did not include a fully completed application form, the interview date and the employment history prior to living in the UK of the member of staff. One member of staff did not have recorded evidence of their induction on their recruitment file and another file did not include proof of qualification.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers work in partnership with other professionals and parents to develop a child-centred service. A social worker praised the 'proactive' approach taken in caring for children and their satisfaction with the home. Another social worker highlighted their appreciation for the support given during a crisis.

Leaders and managers have effectively addressed the requirements and recommendations made at the monitoring visit. Monthly reports completed by the independent person are constructive and demonstrate a commitment to developing a high-quality service for children. Furthermore, the independent person shares their expertise with leaders and managers.

Children are supported by a culturally diverse, competent and caring staff team that takes pride in their work. Staff have a wide range of expertise, including music therapy, art, psychology and sports coaching. Professionals describe staff as 'dedicated'.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a commitment to the ongoing development of staff. Staff receive regular training, individual supervision sessions and team meetings. Staff are enrolled on the necessary vocational training required for their role.

Children live in a home that is maintained to a high standard. Leaders and managers ensure that any repairs needed and any damage caused are quickly addressed. They also buy specialist and reinforced household items to protect against future damage.

There is regular monitoring of the home's quality of care, which includes identifying and reflecting on trends and patterns. Leaders and managers regularly gather the views of professionals, parents, children and staff. However, the views of staff are not included in the quality of care review report.

The registered manager is supported by a dynamic and hard-working deputy manager. Leaders and managers take pride in the meticulous planning for children and the stability offered to them. Leaders and managers appropriately use the organisation's disciplinary procedures to address poor practice.

The language used in some records does not reflect the home's general philosophy. For example, language such as 'kicking off' and 'meltdown' is used to describe children's behaviour.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32 (1)) Specifically, ensure application forms are fully completed, employment prior to working in the UK is recorded, documentary proof of qualifications is on file and the interview date is recorded.	30 September 2021
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)) Specifically, evidence of staff inductions should be included in staff files.	30 September 2021
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. (Regulation 45 (1)(5)) Specifically, the system must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of staff.	30 September 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful and clear recording. In particular, ensure that records are written using appropriate and respectful language. Also ensure that restraint records include the date of staff debrief meetings. ('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: 2594218

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gordon Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 7 St Albans Grove, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 1ND

Responsible individual: Sylvia Gordon

Registered manager: Moya Marshall-Skouras

Inspector

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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