

2596897

Registered provider:

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated and owned by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children who may have social and emotional difficulties. The home registered in July 2020. The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2020.

Due to COVID-19, 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 4 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 August 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: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children move into this home following a well-planned individualised induction. They are welcomed in by a staff team that is attentive and nurturing in its approach. Staff prepare a package of tailored support to children to meet their daily needs. This structure provides consistency for children that helps them to settle and develop trusting relationships with staff.

Children are involved in every aspect of their care planning. Staff take time to listen to children and explore their feelings and emotions. Staff work with children and their specialist health professionals to ensure children's needs are met. The staff work proactively with all professionals to support children's progress. A professional stated, 'Staff have done a cracking job with [Name]. They are consistent and resilient and offer her lots of one-to-one support, always trying to achieve best outcomes for children.'

Staff support children in their education and identify career pathways. Staff communicate well with educational professionals. They share information and ensure they take a proactive part in care team meetings and celebrate children's achievements. As a result, children are excelling.

Children are supported to take part in family time. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this has continued through telephone contact and in the community. Staff take an active part in ensuring this is managed safely, always ensuring children are at the centre of their practice. This helps children develop and maintain a sense of belonging and identity in a supportive environment.

Children plan activities together with staff and their peers. Places of interest are visited often as a group. Additionally, one-to-one local walks and trips to the beach can be enjoyed with a member of staff chosen by the children. This results in children developing a sense of well-being and confidence in their social interactions.

Children are supported to individualise their bedrooms. They are encouraged and supported through financial incentives to keep their rooms tidy and clean. Staff also offer support and praise when appropriate. However, storage space is sometimes an issue that is not consistently addressed.

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

Children are provided with high levels of supervision and emotional support. They are helped to understand their vulnerabilities and to develop safe-care strategies by a competent staff team. Risk assessments and positive behaviour support plans are thorough and well written. These are carefully put together using knowledge gained through proactive working practices with professionals and children. This means children feel safe and secure with staff they trust.

Children have very clear protocols in place for any potential missing-from-home behaviour. Staff follow these protocols that are known to children. Children are aware of the boundaries and expectations that exist to keep them safe. These include welfare calls while out with their friends and the appropriate time for them to return or be collected by staff. The staff have good working relationships with local police and missing-from-care coordinators. The sharing of individual details ensures response is tailored to the level of risk. As a result, children rarely go missing.

Children's emotional well-being is closely monitored, and good daily planning ensures staff are available to listen to children and advise and support. Effective pre-placement planning and training ensures staff are mindful of triggers and indicators of potential harm to children. This helps children to be increasingly safe as a result of being well cared for by an informed and skilled staff team.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and supported by a newly formed assistant management team. Together, they have high aspirations for children. They seek out information to support children and communicate effectively with all professionals. As a result, children's care is consistently reviewed to ensure children make progress from their starting points.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staffing levels have been managed well. The manager has used staff from the local authority sister home and agency staff to deal with any unavoidable shortfalls. This has ensured that children have received continuity of care through the use of familiar staff.

Team meetings are purposeful. They focus on the children and learning from practice. The manager has introduced extended staff handovers to ensure staff are able to reflect on children's behaviours. This supports planning on a daily basis and ensures care is bespoke to individual needs. As a result, children receive a sensitive and consistent approach to their specific care needs.

Staff receive supervision that is reflective and supportive. However, there are isolated periods when formal supervision has not taken place in a timely manner. This is noted by the manager and plans are in place to ensure this is addressed.

The home environment inside and outside is in need of cosmetic attention. It is looking tired inside and the spacious outside areas are not being utilised to their potential. The manager and leadership team are aware, but work needs to be undertaken to ensure that children enjoy and flourish in a physically stimulating environment.

A range of professionals commented on the high level of care and attention to detail that the manager and her staff apply to the care of the children. This, with positive and open communication, supports the progress children make.

The manager has effective internal and external monitoring processes in place. These enable her to understand the strengths and developmental needs of the service. The children's records are well maintained and regular audits ensure any shortfalls are identified and resolved quickly. However, the effectiveness of the electronic recording systems and connectivity are limited.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should improve upon the home environment by ensuring the garden areas in the grounds of the home are maintained to a good standard and are used to enhance the overall living experience for the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the internal home environment is maintained to a high decorative standard and any repairs are done in a timely manner. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that children have access to adequate storage facilities in their bedrooms for their personal items and clothing. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff receive supervision of their practice regularly and contingency plans are in place to avoid any delays. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that electronic records kept (under regulation 38) are easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view them. Information technology systems should ensure that accessibility is appropriate to the demands of the service. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

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: 2596897

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gateshead Local Authority

Registered provider address: Gateshead Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street,
Gateshead, Durham NE8 1HH

Responsible individual: Caroline O'Neill

Registered manager: Danielle Nicol

Inspector

Michael Dack, Social Care Inspector

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