

1271380

Registered provider: Action for Children Services LTD

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a short break service for children that is run by a national charity. All children have a learning disability and additional complex social and emotional needs. A total of eight children access the service.

Four children were accessing the service at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2024.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 July 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 17 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/06/2024	Full	Good
31/07/2023	Full	Good
14/03/2023	Full	Inadequate
08/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff demonstrate exceptional dedication and resilience, consistently achieving high standards of practice. The commitment and dedication of staff create a nurturing environment in which children are supported to make sustained progress and enjoy their time at the home.

Every achievement made by the children is acknowledged and celebrated by all members of staff. These milestones are thoughtfully documented through photographs, which are prominently displayed on a feature board in the main hallway. The display is refreshed monthly, ensuring that each child's progress is continuously recognised. This practice significantly enhances the children's self-esteem and sense of self-worth.

Staff work effectively to provide tailored support to children that fosters independence. Activities such as visiting local shops, selecting food items and managing transactions are thoughtfully encouraged. These simple tasks play a crucial role in building confidence and autonomy in children, which enables them to feel empowered within the wider community.

Staff are proactive in planning and organising meaningful experiences for children, both in the home and in the community. Examples include outings, such as bowling, and dining at popular restaurants, which are arranged in advance to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for the children.

Children's care plans are exemplary; they are comprehensive, clearly structured and responsive to individual needs. The education, health and care plans (EHCPs) and health plans are used effectively to inform the care strategies implemented within the home. This integrated approach ensures consistency and clarity in meeting each child's unique requirements.

All the children have activity scrapbooks, which are used creatively to capture children's wishes, feelings and reflections on activities. These records provide valuable insight into each child's emotional journey and preferences. Staff diligently document children's engagement and progress, ensuring that their voices are heard and respected, even when participation is brief.

Staff demonstrate a deep understanding of children's emotional needs through careful observation of body language and subtle verbal cues; they are able to anticipate and respond to children's needs with sensitivity and care.

The diversity board is a standout feature, offering a dynamic and inclusive way to explore different cultural themes each month. Rather than focusing solely on food, staff incorporate creative elements such as traditional dance and storytelling. This initiative enriches the experience for both children and staff, fostering a deeper appreciation of

cultural diversity. The innovative presentation of each theme reflects the staff's commitment to inclusive practice and meaningful celebration.

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

Staff consistently demonstrate a proactive approach to safeguarding. Individual risk assessments are conducted prior to all external activity, and appropriate plans are implemented to ensure each child's safety and well-being. A 'Grab and Go' information document is maintained, and staff diligently record all relevant details before leaving the home. This process ensures that the child's needs remain central to all planning and decision-making.

Behaviour management plans are clearly structured, outlining a range of strategies that staff can employ to de-escalate challenging situations. Alternative approaches to working with children are regularly discussed during handover and team meetings, fostering a culture of reflection and continuous improvement. This collaborative practice ensures that staff feel confident and well-equipped to support children's progress.

Children are thoughtfully matched with peers and staff to promote the development of positive relationships. This careful consideration contributes to fewer incidents of children becoming upset or of needing additional support from staff to help ensure their safety, and to a more harmonious and supportive environment in which children can thrive.

Any allegations that are made about the conduct of staff are treated with the utmost seriousness. Each incident is thoroughly investigated, and external scrutiny is sought to ensure transparency and accountability.

There are no incidents of children going missing from the home, reflecting the effectiveness of supervision and engagement strategies.

Restraint is used only when necessary to protect children from harm. When employed, it is done with sensitivity and in accordance with established protocols, prioritising the child's safety and dignity.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has cultivated a culture of high aspiration and positivity that is evident throughout her interactions with both staff and children. Her ambitious and creative leadership style inspires the team, and this is reflected in the quality of work being delivered with the children.

Staff consistently demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment, contributing to a vibrant and nurturing atmosphere.

The home itself is bright, welcoming and thoughtfully decorated with sensory boards and toys around the building, creating a pleasant and comfortable environment for children.

Staff hold the manager in high regard and express genuine enjoyment in working at the home. They say that they feel well supported and are actively encouraged to consider their career development.

The manager is diligent in identifying when staff may not be progressing appropriately in their roles and addresses this constructively through supervision and targeted performance planning.

There is strong managerial oversight of children's care plans, with prompt action taken to address any identified risks. Behaviour management plans are regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring that staff are well informed and equipped to respond effectively to each child's needs and to promote positive behaviour.

The manager works collaboratively with the local authority and health professionals, seeking and applying appropriate advice and guidance to enhance the quality and accuracy of children's care plans.

Work undertaken with children is reflective of their daily lives and aspirations. Records are detailed, capturing achievements and aligning clearly with future planning. These documents are accessible to both children and their parents, promoting transparency and shared understanding.

Communication with families is excellent. Parents express deep appreciation for the support provided to their children, with some expressing a desire for more frequent access to the service due to its positive impact.

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 1271380

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children Services LTD

Registered provider address: Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road,
Watford WD18 8AG

Responsible individual: Samantha Oliver

Registered manager: Cinnamon Short

Inspector

Shaheda Dhandia, Social Care Inspector

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