

2537149

Registered provider: Action For Children services 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 charity. It is registered to care for up to four children at a time. Some children may have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or sensory impairment.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 November 2025

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

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

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 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2024	Full	Good
16/11/2023	Full	Good
08/12/2022	Full	Good
27/10/2021	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. They moved into the home in 2020 and 2021. The inspector spent time communicating with the children and observing their interactions with staff.

The registered manager and staff team are highly ambitious for the children, and this has a positive impact on their experiences and progress. Staff provide care with love, and this makes children feel cherished and respected. Children and staff are closely bonded. Staff are highly attuned to children's needs, and they are proactive in their delivery of personalised care.

Staff are well informed about children's individual health needs and how this can influence their behaviours and unintentionally place them at risk of harm. Since the last inspection, staff have focused on creating an environment that offers children consistency, established routines and predictability. They have devised strategies that have enabled children to feel emotionally safe and calm.

Children have made exceptional progress since the last inspection, demonstrating that staff's approach is beneficial to their development and well-being. For example, one child's anxiety has been significantly reduced, and this coincides with staff supporting her increased understanding of emotional literacy, vocabulary and the concept of time. This child's progress has been life-changing. She is able to spend more time in the community, participating in education and activities with her peers.

Another child used to be extremely introverted, but with staff's encouragement, he has grown in confidence. He can engage in conversations and express his views and wishes. He is excelling at school and has participated in residential trips and volunteering in cafes and restaurants. Staff have helped the third child to increase his patience and self-control. He exhibits improved self-care and has established a lovely relationship with his barber.

Staff are conscious of children's communication needs and cognitive functioning. They ensure that interventions are tailored to children's individual needs. For example, they use scripts to deliver consistent messages to one child. Whereas another child is highly reliant on visual aids. Staff ensure that conversations are supported by pictures and photos to aid this child's understanding. They are aiming to strengthen this child's communication skills with the use of technology.

As the children are getting older, staff are supporting them to develop and strengthen their independence skills. This includes helping children to look up recipes, purchase ingredients from shops and cook meals. Additionally, staff teach children how to wash their clothes, make their beds and clean their rooms. Some children require more encouragement from others, but they are all making progress.

The registered manager and staff are proactive in ensuring that children spend time with people who they love and miss. They have established positive relationships with parents based on trust and mutual respect. Family-time plans are realistic and take account of everyone's needs. In order to help families, staff join family time, and they fund activities to ensure positive experiences.

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

Staff have developed a thorough understanding of children's needs and vulnerabilities. They understand that behaviour is a form of communication, and they are curious about the messages children try to convey. They monitor behavioural patterns and make necessary changes to support children, for example adjusting their routine and having chats to prepare them for this. Where possible, staff encourage children to express their views using words.

The registered manager draws a distinction between challenging behaviours that are linked to health (impulsive) and those that are linked to behaviour. Since the last inspection, there have been seven behaviour incidents. Staff have intervened using appropriate strategies such as reducing demands, giving children space and talking with them about kind and respectful behaviour. Staff listen to children's views and help them to learn from incidents. There have not been any physical interventions.

Staff recognise when children's interests have the potential to put them at risk or pose a risk to others. For example, one child has a keen interest in horror movies, but they struggle to distinguish between fact and fiction. Staff have created bespoke tools that help the child differentiate between movies that cause them positive and negative feelings. They also talk with the child about actors, using visual aids to show them the difference between their real lives and paid acting roles.

Since the last inspection, the home has received one complaint, and the registered manager responded to this with transparency, sharing information with senior leaders and conducting an investigation. There have been two medication errors. The child did not experience any harm. However, there was a robust response from managers that included reflective supervision, reissuing training and shadowing administration of medicine.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager and team leaders have positive relationships with the children and know them extremely well. The children enjoy their company and show affection towards them. The registered manager and team leaders are fierce and tenacious advocates for the children. They build strong working relationships with external professionals. However, they will hold them to account if they perceive them to fall short of their duties towards children.

The registered manager ensures that staff practice is informed by research, training and clinical guidance. Team leaders proactively use their learning to devise innovative

strategies that work for the children. They consult with parents, schools and medical professionals, seeking their input in order to improve strategies. The registered manager and team leaders persistently strive to 'do better'.

The registered manager and team leaders model practice, and they help staff to strengthen their skills through learning opportunities, team meetings and supervision. They are ambitious for the children, and they expect staff to exhibit the same level of enthusiasm towards improving the children's lives and securing the best outcomes. Any shortfalls in practice are met with a swift and robust response.

Parents and external professionals are extremely fond of the home, and they believe that children receive excellent care from the staff team. One parent said that the home is 'more than gold-star standard'. Staff practice, especially in relation to autism and pica, is outstanding. Their knowledge and strategies are worthy of wider dissemination.

The registered manager and team leaders are child-focused practitioners, and they make a remarkably strong and inspirational team.

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: 2537149

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action For Children services limited

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

Responsible individual: Vacant

Registered manager: Natalie Tester

Inspector

Tara Webb, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked-after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025