

2590824

Registered provider: Action for Children services LTD

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a charitable organisation on behalf of the local authority.

The home provides short-break accommodation for up to six children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The home registered with Ofsted in August 2020. The manager registered with Ofsted on 16 October 2024.

During this inspection, no children were stayed at the home due to staff training. Some children were contacted via telephone call.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 March 2025

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: 27 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2024	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Good
07/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Currently, 32 children access the service on a rotational basis. Children have a diverse range of physical and learning needs, with some requiring daily medication due to medical conditions. Staff are well-equipped with the knowledge and understanding of each child's individual needs. Parents feel confident that their children are well cared for during their stay at the home.

Children's visits are well planned, with children mostly staying with the same group to support the friendships they have made. Staff contact parents prior to each child's stay to ensure they have the most up-to-date information, helping to make the child's stay safe and enjoyable. Parents say that children enjoy coming to the home, with some seeing it as a holiday where they can socialise and meet their friends in a safe space.

Staff have a thorough understanding of children's health needs, ensuring they receive effective support to maintain good health. Detailed health care plans are created by key workers in collaboration with parents and health professionals, providing clear information on how to address children's health needs, including complex medical conditions. Staff follow medication administration processes that are audited weekly.

Children have fun when they stay at the home. They enjoy a range of activities in the home and in the community. One child talked about baking cupcakes and making Greek salad during their stay. Children are helped to choose their activities using visual aids and social stories to help them express their views. Children have good routines when they stay at the home, and this helps them to settle.

When children come to stay, they enjoy a clean, homely environment where they can relax and play safely. The home is welcoming, with photos of the children proudly displayed. Each child has a spacious, personalised bedroom adapted to meet their specific needs. The garden features a large trampoline, swings, and plenty of space for children to play.

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

Children are safeguarded effectively. Staff have an appropriate understanding of children's needs and know how to support them if they are upset. Staff can identify whether children are happy or sad by the sounds or gestures that they make. They work well with parents and the placing authority to ensure that any concerns are shared appropriately to keep children safe during their stay.

Staff have a solid understanding of safeguarding procedures. They benefit from a variety of training courses that are tailored to the children's needs. Leaders and managers work closely with relevant agencies when allegations against members of staff are raised.

Staff understand potential risks to the children when they stay. They complete detailed risk assessments which are updated regularly. The assessments are informed by the children's professional network to ensure that staff take the appropriate action when required. Professionals such as psychotherapist attend staff meetings to discuss strategies to help staff manage children's behaviour.

Positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded. Staff celebrate children's achievements, no matter how small, and view all behaviour as a form of communication. They discuss topics such as online safety and puberty using the children's preferred methods of communication. Staff help children develop self-control, resilience, and new coping strategies. Incidents are well-managed by staff, who use de-escalation techniques to support the children. As a result, regardless of children's significant needs all children have positive experiences during their stay at the home.

The admission process for new children using the service is sufficient. Staff attend professional's meetings and visit new children's families and schools. New children are invited for tea visits as part of the assessment process to ensure that only children whose needs can be met by staff are accepted. However, records do not show this process well.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is a strong advocate for the children, maintaining excellent communication with their families and professional networks. The registered manager ensures that any decisions made regarding the children are carefully planned, well thought out, and in their best interests. They offer flexible stay arrangements to support the children, while ensuring they benefit from staying with friends in their peer group.

Parents praise the excellent communication with staff, noting that they receive written feedback, phone calls, and photos when their children return home. Professionals also commend the staff for consistently attending meetings and promptly sharing information. This thorough recording and information-sharing provide a clear and detailed account of the children's experiences during their stays.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities. They benefit from regular supervision sessions, covering a broad agenda. Supervision sessions are reflective, offer staff support and guidance and consider the needs and progress of children. However, some supervision records do not show this support well.

The manager provides flexibility in children's stays including responding to family emergencies by arranging additional stays.

External monitoring supports the manager to make improvements at the home. However, the new independent person has not yet accessed children's relevant information despite visiting on four occasions and have not consistently secured a range of views from parents.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff receive supervision of their practice from a suitable professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff supervision records reflect the needs and progress of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. In particular, ensure that the views of parents and carers are sought and the visitor has access to all relevant information. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the process of admission of new children to the home are recorded appropriate to show how new children needs are assessed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 2590824

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: Emily Evans

Registered manager: Amanda Small

Inspector

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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