

2734923

Registered provider: Action for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This charity-run home provides care for up to four children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairment and/or social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The current provider registered this home with Ofsted in August 2023. The registered manager left in December 2023.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 3 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/01/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there were four children living at the home. This inspection was brought forward to address specific concerns received by Ofsted.

Children are very happy at this home. They blossom due to the high levels of support and tailored care that they receive. Children benefit from staff who know them well. All the children have a sense of belonging and stability, due to having lived together for several years. This has created a family atmosphere.

All the children attend school and benefit from education that is supportive and individualised. An assistant headteacher described the working relationships with the home's staff as 'amazing'. One child is planning to go to college. Staff are helping her to develop confidence in using public transport so that she can travel to college independently.

Children's health is supported through a good diet, plenty of sleep and healthy emotional well-being. Staff attend health appointments with the children. When children need additional specialist help, staff recognise this and advocate for them to receive it.

Communication is supported by staff who understand children's individual communication styles. For one child, using pictorial symbols to support their speech helps them to be understood more successfully, particularly with new staff. One parent said staff 'have had a huge impact' on their child's speech.

There is a wonderful sense of playfulness at the home. Staff encourage children to have fun, learn from their daily experiences and to try new activities. Children seek staff out to listen to music, dance and play outdoor games in the garden designed for all weathers. To help a child enjoy the local soft play area unrestricted, staff booked the activity for the child's sole use. The pictures taken reflect the joy the child experienced.

Children enjoy the opportunity to decorate their personal space. Staff recently supported a child to choose new bedroom furniture.

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

Staff use therapeutic techniques to explore how children may be feeling during times of distress. They consider how past trauma impacts on the child's well-being and respond with care and empathy to support changes in behaviour.

Risk management plans are updated regularly and reflect any current concerns. Staff understand the plans and are confident these reflect risk levels. This helps children to have new experiences that consider their age, ability and understanding.

The staff discuss scenarios to help them to develop strategies and responses to behavioural changes. This helps them to embed the home's model of care and share ideas. Staff are keen to be part of this learning process.

Key-worker sessions are thoughtful and based on important topics in the children's lives. These include online safety, positive relationships and work to prepare children for the future. Staff are creative in helping children to have a voice. Staff work hard to ensure that children understand how to keep themselves safe.

The door to the office does not close properly and has not been adequately repaired. This was reported but the repair carried out was not effective. Therefore, the requirement from the last inspection is restated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is new in post and has recently applied to register with Ofsted. She is appropriately qualified and experienced in managing neurodiverse children. She demonstrates a high standard of leadership and management and is committed to providing improved standards of care.

Staff are highly positive about the manager. They say that she is approachable, understanding and supportive of them. Staff praised her ideas for developing practice. Team meetings are well attended. The number of team meetings has been increased and they include conversations centred on scenarios, to support consistent staff responses.

Leaders and managers are child-focused and family oriented. Partnership work with families is strong. The staff sustain family ties through detailed and creative work. One parent said their child is 'making so much progress because of how they [staff] understand' them.

Managers use effective quality assurance systems. They attend multi-agency risk and safeguarding meetings. Managers are good at thinking about long-term strategy.

Staff are supported by regular supervision sessions with the manager or team leaders. Professional development opportunities are good and all staff are suitably trained. A detailed workforce development plan is in place to guide improvements to the staff's skills and the quality of care. New members of staff have a comprehensive induction that supports their understanding of the home's policies and procedures.

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, The 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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that immediate action is taken when a fault is recorded, and that fire doors close properly. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	3 June 2024

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: 2734923

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children

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

Responsible individual: Kate Isham

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Trudy Potter, Social Care 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 <http://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 2024