

SC000673

Registered provider: Action for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for children and young people who have learning disabilities. The home can provide care and accommodation for up to five children to live permanently and for five children to have short breaks.

The manager was registered in June 2018 and is suitably qualified for the role.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 January 2020

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: 19 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2019	Full	Good
12/03/2018	Full	Good
13/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/12/2016	Full	Good

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(1), (2)(d)) In particular, the flooring next to the main office should be repaired to remove a tripping hazard.	14/02/2020

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

In particular, staff must ensure that all entries relating to medication in children's case records are carefully and accurately recorded and reflect the current situation.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people can build trusted and secure relationships with the adults who care for them. Staff know the children well and can intuitively respond to their needs. This means that children and young people feel safe and do not become distressed easily.

The staff work closely with professionals and the families of children and young people to develop consistent routines. This improves the experiences of children and young people, as well as the quality of life for the family. One social worker spoken to stated that the placement is going 'spectacularly well' and described the child's progress as 'amazing'.

Children and young people living in the home show warmth and affection to the adults who care for them, and this affection is returned by staff. The children and young people are making good progress at school and with their health needs and are also developing social skills that will help them into adulthood.

Staff listen carefully to the views of children and young people using methods that are both effective and creative. Staff were observed encouraging children and young people to ask an Alexa device to play their favourite songs and nursery rhymes. This develops children and young people's confidence in communicating their needs to others, improving their independence skills and gaining control over day-to-day decisions that affect their lives.

The staff spend good-quality time with children and young people, enabling them to feel safe and part of a warm, nurturing family-style group. Expectations and boundaries are explained and consistently applied to children and young people, and positive behaviour is rewarded with praise or small rewards. This approach provides a structure for the children and young people's day-to-day lives and develops their trust in the adults who care for them.

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

The risks are understood by staff, who provide a high level of close supervision to children and young people. Risk assessments are detailed and contain clear strategies to address risk that are easy to follow. This enables children and young people to become increasingly safe.

Physical intervention is rarely needed but, if it is used, it is proportionate and for a very short period. All staff are trained in the home's preferred method of physical intervention, and their recording of any incidents is thorough and provides an opportunity to reflect and consider how physical intervention can be avoided in future. This helps children and young people to learn to regulate their emotions and to change their behaviour.

The home has appropriate security measures in place to enable children and young people to be protected. During this inspection period, no children and young people have gone missing from the home.

The home is well equipped and homely in terms of its physical environment; however, the flooring in one of the corridors has begun to lift and presents as a tripping hazard to children, young people and staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively and efficiently by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager. He is supported by two team leaders, who share the same vision and commitment to the children and young people in their care. They know the children and young people well and have a clear understanding of the progress that they are making in respect of their plans.

Since the last full inspection, there have been difficulties in recruiting staff with the right skills and qualifications for the role. However, due to the commitment, flexibility and determination of the whole staff team, this has had very little impact upon the children and young people living at the home. Staff have continued to provide high-quality continuity of care from a group of familiar adults.

The registered manager has systems in place to monitor the home effectively. Care plans are very detailed and clearly detail how the staff are to meet the needs of individual children and young people. However, some medical information held on file was inaccurate. While this had not led to any child or young person being placed at harm, it does increase the risk of a mistake being made.

Since the last full inspection, the manager has ensured that safer recruitment checks have been improved, thus ensuring that staff are suitably vetted and able to deliver high-quality services to children and young people. Staff supervision has also improved, and it now takes place regularly and concentrates on the children and young people's progress as well as incorporating safeguarding throughout the records.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC000673

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children

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

Responsible individual: Catherine Joyce

Registered manager: Terence Wintersgill

Inspector

Mark Proffitt, social care inspector

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