

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 and is registered for care and accommodation of up to five children who have learning disabilities to live permanently, and for up to five children who have learning disabilities to have short breaks.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 March 2018

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: 13 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The staff know the children and young people well and are skilled in providing individual good-quality care.
- The staff are committed to ensuring that the children and young people are helped to progress towards more independent living.
- There are very good links with other professionals, which means that the children and young people get the best possible care.
- The children and young people are able to access a range of stimulating activities. This offers them new leisure experiences, helping to improve emotional and physical well-being.
- Family contact is supported. This improves the quality of relationships that the children and young people have with their families.
- The children and young people are kept very safe at the home. No child or young person has gone missing and staffing levels are appropriate.
- The children and young people clearly enjoy attending the short-breaks service and there are a wide variety of activities for them to take part in, both inside and outside of the home.
- The manager clearly understands the strengths and weaknesses of the service and has plans in place to address shortfalls.
- The new staffing structure is working well. It has given a clearer focus to the management arrangements, making staff feel well supported and valued.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The manager should ensure that all care plans are kept up to date to ensure that the children and young people receive planned and effective care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/12/2016	Full	Good
18/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/01/2016	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, 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 care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))	13/07/2018

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides a five-bedroomed short-breaks service and a five-bedroomed long-stay residential home. Both are in the same large building situated in its own grounds.

The manager and staff team work hard to build secure and trusting relationship with the children and young people.

The children and young people make clear progress. One child was unable to follow simple instructions such as being asked to put on a coat to go outside. The staff have worked with him using the 'now and then' approach. He is now able to listen to and respond positively to requests. This has greatly enhanced his self-confidence and independence. His social worker said: 'I have been really impressed with the work carried out by the staff. They have been really determined [to] help and support with these skills. They also made it fun, he got lots of praise and there are some lovely photographs.'

The staff have effective relationships with schools. They help and support all of the children and young people with homework. There are lots of educational toys, games and books to help encourage learning. Children and young people who live there or who have used the service for a long time are making good progress at school.

Life skills form an important part of the practice of the staff. The children and young people are supported and encouraged to develop self-care skills. They are able to keep their rooms tidy and set and clear the meal table. On a personal level, they are helped

and supported to develop the skills needed to keep themselves clean. A parent said: 'It is amazing how the staff have been. They have helped my son with his continence and he is a much happier boy. I am so proud of him.'

The staff have received training to ensure that they have sufficient understanding to carry out healthcare tasks competently. This increases their confidence and promotes the children's and young people's well-being. There are very good links with health professionals. This ensures that the health of the children and young people is managed well.

The staff support contact by providing transport and supervision when needed. This has a positive impact by helping the children and young people to maintain relationships with their families.

The children's and young people's guide is updated regularly and is in line with the statement of purpose. It outlines the boundaries and expectations of the home. Regular children's and young people's meetings are supported by the staff. Meetings are recorded using the picture exchange communication system (PECS). This means that they are accessible for the children and young people, ensuring that they feel that their views and wishes are listened to.

There are a wide range of activities, both inside and outside of the home. Baking is very popular as is the Wii. There are lots of toys, books and board games. One young person loves to listen to music and the staff regularly join her in singing along to her favourite songs. Other activities include swimming, meals out, bowling and visits to the cinema and local beaches. This ensures that physical and emotional well-being are promoted.

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

The children and young people are all kept very safe. The staff are both caring and attentive. They know the children and young people well and are skilled in communicating with them. A parent said: 'My daughter has been having short breaks at the home for almost 10 years. The staff care for her well and keep her very safe.'

Risks are assessed and managed well. A number of the children and young people have very complex health needs with high levels of risks attached. The staff are clear about these and what to do if the need arises.

Clear boundaries are in place that take into account individual abilities, competence and understanding. The staff are familiar with the presenting challenging behaviour displayed by some children and young people and are skilled at addressing these behaviours. Positive behaviour management plans ensure that the staff are able to effectively de-escalate situations at an early stage. Physical interventions are used at times and these are appropriate and effective. Physical interventions are comprehensively recorded and are monitored by the manager or a team leader.

There have been no children or young people who have gone missing from the home. Incidents of bullying are very rare. The staff are able to deal well with any day-to-day disagreements. They use these situations to help the children and young people to understand sharing and how to live together. Support plans ensure that the staff are

able to guide and support behaviour in a positive and proactive way. This means that positive behaviour is promoted and the use of sanctions is very low.

The storage, administration and recording of medication is managed well. Safe handling of medication is part of the staff induction programme. Further certificated training is completed by staff and updated on a regular basis. This reduces the likelihood of errors in administration, keeping the children and young people safe.

Generic health and safety is well managed. Risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly. Fire drills are carried out as required. All equipment in the home is well maintained and tested within timescales. This means that all aspects of the overall quality of care are given equal consideration, ensuring that the home is a safe place for the children and young people to live.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is currently studying for an appropriate leadership and management qualification. He has extensive experience in working in children's residential care. He leads a staff team whose members are knowledgeable, committed and loyal.

The staff are appropriately recruited. There is a full staff team offering the children and young people consistent levels of care, which enables them to thrive. The staff state that they feel supported and that the training and supervision they receive is good. The staff receive regular supervision and have an annual appraisal and the content of these is good.

The organisation that runs the home has made some changes to the staffing structures within both of the services. There is now one overall manager and two team leaders, one for each of the services. Both of the team leaders have worked at the home for some time and have considerable experience in children's residential care. This has strengthened the management structure and is a positive move. The staff state that they feel that this new structure is working very well. A member of staff said: 'I like the new arrangements. It means that I get to work closely with my line manager and they are really supportive.'

The manager is clear about the strengths and areas of development needed in the home and has a plan of how these can be achieved. The manager is child-centred and clearly values the consistently high-quality care provided to the children and young people by the staff. He ensures that the children and young people make continued progress.

Care planning is still an area which needs some improvement. Plans are in place, but they are too long and complicated. This leads to poor recording that is not always up to date. The manager is aware of these shortfalls and has plans in place to make the necessary improvements.

The home is warm and welcoming. The grounds are very well maintained, offering safe and pleasant surroundings for the children and young people.

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 differences 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: Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, Watford WD18 8AG

Responsible individual: Catherine Joyce

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Dot McGough: social care inspector

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