

SC004429

Registered provider: Action For Children

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides short breaks for children who have severe learning and/or physical disabilities. Over 30 children currently have regular short breaks. The home is operated and managed by an independent provider in partnership with the local authority.

The registered manager has been in post a number of years. She holds the level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Inspection date: 20 March 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 1 May 2018

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

Staff and the manager are very well prepared for each child's stay. They welcome children warmly each time they come. The manager matches groups of children who can spend time together comfortably. New children are introduced to the service carefully and with sensitivity to their individual needs and preferences. Many children have enjoyed regular breaks for many years. Three new children are settling into the service and more are likely to start introductions soon. Places usually become available when children leave the service after they have turned 18 years old.

Staff are well trained. They are patient, respectful and gentle when they help children

with eating and personal hygiene. Staff communicate with children using a variety of methods, which are adapted to suit each child's specific speech and language needs. Staff give children choices that suit their abilities. They provide a good variety of play, activities and experiences related to what they know each individual child likes.

Children's families value the service and have great confidence in the quality of care provided. Staff speak to each child's parents shortly before their stay. This way, staff stay up to date with children's current needs, behaviour and circumstances.

Staff reward and praise all good behaviour. Staff minimise the likelihood of accidents and harm through regular risk reviews and by adhering to agreed plans. Staff minimise children's anxieties by being attuned to their likes, dislikes and triggers. For example, they make sure that children know what is happening, who is here, and what choices they have. As a result, children are happy here and they feel secure.

Staff record details about each child's stay. They devise plans and targets about all aspects of children's care, protection and development. However, staff do not record their own practice in any detail. This limits what the staff team can learn about what works well and less well for individual children.

The manager leads the home well and staff feel well supported. However, the manager does not identify staff's practice strengths and weaknesses when reviewing the records that they write. Staff's supervision sessions are not used as an opportunity to reflect on and develop their skills and care practice. These things hold back staff development and potentially hold children's progress back.

Staff and managers take the protection of each child seriously. They are well trained to whistle-blow on any poor or unsafe practice. They supervise children well and consistently follow safety plans and routines. Staff are alert to signs of abuse or harm and they work cooperatively with parents, schools and child protection agencies if there are concerns about a child. However, the manager does not record all the actions taken when concerns are investigated. This makes her monitoring activity less effective and means that she cannot easily see if all necessary actions have been taken during and after investigations. She also cannot easily identify delays or when practice improvement is needed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/05/2018	Full	Good
06/02/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

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, 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	30/04/2019
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular, provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b)(2)(d))	30/04/2019

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)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: SC004429

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: Lee Furniss

Registered manager: Louise Tumulty

Inspector

Rachel Britten, social care inspector

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