

SC043994

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is part of an independent school for children with autism and learning disabilities, which is on the same site. The home provides care for up to 11 children across 2 houses. At the time of the inspection, 10 children were living in the home.

The inspectors only inspected the residential care provision on this site.

The manager has been in post since May 2026 and has not yet submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

The registered provider has appointed a new responsible individual, and we are currently checking this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 June 2026

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 22 July 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/07/2025	Full	Good
07/08/2024	Full	Good
21/11/2023	Full	Good
09/08/2022	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Most children are making progress and enjoy a wide range of activities and social opportunities that support their development. Staff are committed, focused and well attuned to children's individual needs. This supports them to build positive relationships with children. Many of the children are non-speaking. Staff know children's individual personalities, and this helps them to understand when children may need extra support or help.

There have been changes to the management structure since the last inspection, and new appointees are still very early into their new roles. Several shortfalls were identified in relation to infrequent staff supervision and appraisals and lack of consistency regarding good medication practice. Care planning and ongoing support for one child from their placing authority are below the required standard, and the management team has not effectively challenged this.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from highly personalised care and are supported by a committed and child-focused staff team. Most children are very settled and have lived in the home for several years. Staff work hard to provide positive opportunities on a day-to-day basis for children, including sensory experiences, outings into the local community and planned trips further afield.

Some children are at important transitional stages in their lives, with 2 children due to move on from the home in the near future and another child still transitioning to a full-time place in the home. For one child, this move has at times been difficult and complex in nature. The management team has not effectively engaged the placing authority in the care planning process for this child, which means the current plan is unclear.

All children present with a range of complex health and communication needs, and this means that staff need to regularly adapt their approach to ensure that children are receiving the right care and support. Children's plans are individualised, and staff demonstrate a good understanding of their underlying support needs.

Children enjoy their time in the home and benefit from a range of activities and social opportunities. Although children enjoy interacting with their peers, many children prefer their own company or time with staff. There is a high number of staff available each day, and each child benefits from individually allocated staff. This minimises staffing pressures and enhances the opportunities available for children.

Staff recognise the importance of children's participation and are keen to support children to express their wishes and feelings. Social stories are routinely used to help

children understand day-to-day changes in their lives, alongside changes in their plans or support needs. This practice is well embedded and increasingly helps children to understand the world around them and feel as though they are able to make choices about this.

The home environment is organised effectively and meets the needs of children. It is clean and hygienic. Staff ensure that they work closely with parents and consider the children's personal interests and tastes while decorating their rooms. Staff pay close attention to what brings comfort to children in their physical space, and their respective rooms reflect this.

Children maintain relationships with their birth families, and this varies according to their individual care plans. Some children enjoy directly participating in weekly updates to their families, including deciding on which photographs to send and writing about their experiences of living in the home.

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

While safeguarding concerns are infrequent, there is a clear focus on promoting children's welfare. Staff routinely help children to learn about keeping themselves safe as well as helping them to understand risks within the wider community.

Staff and managers demonstrate a good understanding of risk management and have worked with children's families to ensure that children's opportunities are not limited by the complexity of their underlying needs. Although there have been occasions when staff have found some adaptations difficult, such as the use of seat-belt restrictors, they have been able to work through these challenges, and children have benefited as a result. For one child, this helped them to develop their insight into safety while travelling.

Children benefit from a multi-disciplinary team, and a growing therapeutic training programme for care staff helps to create meaningful connections between school, therapy and care. This helps staff to become increasingly aware of children's underlying sensory and therapeutic needs, and this practice is shared among colleagues to enhance the support that children receive.

Regular multi-disciplinary meetings are held, and these help to promote agreed plans and targets for children. Consequently, children's care is well coordinated, and staff use a range of risk assessments and plans to help inform their practice and promote children's welfare.

Staff aim to prepare and support children to be ready to transition into their adult lives and recognise the importance of children developing their independence and self-care skills. Staff work well with children's families to help promote consistency in these processes between the different environments that children reside in.

Children are supported to develop their ability to self-regulate and connect their feelings and inner selves. This helps to improve children's understanding of when they may need help. Staff use several strategies and approaches to achieve this, including social stories, direct communication and picture-based learning.

Any investigations into concerns regarding staff practice have been carried out appropriately and measures put in place to support staff development and learning. New staff are appropriately recruited, and this minimises the risk of unsafe adults working in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in the leadership team, and these changes are still being embedded. These changes have been appropriately managed, and there has been no wider impact for staff. Some appointees have naturally progressed into more senior roles. This provides stability for the existing staff team.

Oversight and monitoring processes by managers are not consistently effective. Too many staff do not receive regular supervision or have their performance appraised annually. Despite this, staff speak positively about the day-to-day support they receive and are particularly complimentary about the impact of the new home manager. Morale is positive across the wider staff team.

Although there have been improvements to the medication dispensing process since the last inspection and enhanced training for staff, staff do not always pay due care and attention when dispensing medication and follow the detailed procedures set out for them, meaning there have been several medication errors. This practice must improve as most children are entirely reliant on staff to dispense and manage their medication.

The management team does not fully understand its responsibilities in relation to care planning decisions for children. One child's transition into the home has been significantly extended, and, despite the child's underlying plan to permanently live in the home, their legal status contradicts this. While managers have tried to raise this with the placing authority, this has not been done in a proactive manner.

Managers have not challenged the support that the child has received from their placing authority, and there has been no formal review of the child's care. The child has not been visited by their social worker for a substantial period. The professional network around the child is not working together to the best of their ability, and this places the child in a vulnerable situation in relation to their overall care plan.

Feedback from children's parents is generally positive, and most parents value the support that staff provide their children and feel this enhances their life opportunities and self-development. Communication with parents following matters of disagreement about children's placements within the home is not always as transparent and effective as it could be.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation (5)(a)(c))	28 August 2026
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation (14) (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii)(e)(i)) In particular, the registered person must engage effectively with the children's placing authorities in the implementation of the	28 August 2026

children's relevant plans. Leaders and managers should have an awareness of the statutory responsibilities of the local authority, and they should use this understanding to promote children's interests and the progression of their individual plans.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation (23) (1) (2)(b))	18 June 2026
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation (33) (4)(a)(b)(c))	28 August 2026

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: SC043994

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

Registered provider address: Seebeck House, 1 Seebeck Place, Milton Keynes MK5 8FR

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Rose Joseph, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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