

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	13/04/2016
Unique reference number	SC489212
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	MacIntyre Academies
Registered person address	MacIntyre Care, 602 South Seventh Street, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK9 2JA

Responsible individual	Brenda Mullen
Registered manager	Natalie Boothroyd
Inspector	Chris Peel

Inspection date	13/04/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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.	
<p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The manager and staff are keen to develop their practice and improve the experience children and young people have of living in the home. They regularly evaluate their own practice and respond positively to recommendations made by the independent person in his reports. The requirement and recommendations made at the last inspection have all been addressed satisfactorily. During the inspection, a team meeting was used to identify what had gone well over a recent holiday period and what could be improved, with staff members identified to take matters forward.</p> <p>Exemplary efforts are made to respond to the wishes and feelings of children and young people. Staff use various forms of communication to elicit opinions about a range of issues, recorded by photographs of communication aids and/or notes. These are shared with the rest of the team, family of the children and young people and other professionals. Plans to introduce advocates are well underway. Careful consideration has been given to how best to equip these professionals for working with children and young people living with autism, explaining their role and introducing them.</p> <p>Behaviour is seen as a means of communication and interpreted, particularly for children and young people unable to verbalise. During the inspection, a member of staff commented that a young person had taken a bag of flour from the kitchen and the member of staff said, 'I took this to mean he would like some messy play.' He had clearly engaged in this as the evidence was all around.</p> <p>Another example of meeting expressed wishes is the change of a room downstairs to be a bedroom for a child who was upset by the noise of others at bedtime and had disturbed nights. The move has resulted in him having a better night's sleep and expressing greater satisfaction with his short breaks.</p> <p>Complaints are encouraged and one young person had made three complaints since the last inspection, all of which were handled appropriately and quickly resolved.</p> <p>The recording of incidents such as physical interventions and episodes of going missing has improved, with adaptations to the format to ensure that they evidence timescales required by regulation. Additional cross-referenced recording normally</p>	

provides a thorough account of incidents, how they are responded to and comments by a manager. The record of a recent incident of a young person absconding is ambiguous about the length of time he was actually missing. However, it is evident from the record and discussions with staff that the incident was managed well as it could be. Since then the young person's safety has been maintained, information shared with relevant people and agreement to further preventative measures reached.

The appointment of two assistant managers and their designation as authorised persons for the purposes of monitoring records means that none were found to be out of timescales. Currently, their written comments do not always evaluate the appropriateness or effectiveness of interventions, so that the opportunity to learn from incidents is not demonstrated.

A statement of purpose with the new management structure should be forwarded to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (Ofsted).

Extensive efforts are made to encourage children and young people to develop their skills. Goal planning is well embedded in the culture of the home, whether children and young people are in long-term placements or on short breaks. Good liaison with professionals based in the school, particularly the occupational therapists, has resulted in well-worded targets, clear recording and baseline assessments from which to measure progress.

Examples of improvements that children and young people are making were observed during the inspection, including the young person who had enjoyed messy play spending longer vacuuming up the spilt flour than he had done previously, and another managing to calm himself quicker after a period of considerable distress in order to be able to have use of a music player.

Progress and contributions to the life of the home are marked by such things as taking and displaying photographs or awarding certificates. The use of rewards and effective management of challenging behaviour are helping most children and young people to reduce incidents of challenging behaviour.

Life experiences are enhanced by the use of community facilities or outings, such as local enclosed play areas or trips to the seaside. Children and young people also benefit from positive relationships with staff, which involve humour, affection and sensitive management of difficult situations. This allows children and young people to lessen their anxieties and be open to learning opportunities.

Many areas of the home have been redecorated and one area has been redesignated to be a place to relax, which means that children and young people have a pleasurable experience of them. One young person has moved bedroom, having written graffiti on the walls, and is currently motivated to keep it a more pleasant room to live in.

Most consents are obtained from those with parental responsibility but some, such as for off-site activities and publicity, are not in the files. Similarly, a few risk assessments are missing or review dates to update them have been missed. Some documents meant to be on files were available electronically but not printed off. A recently introduced file audit process has yet to be used to get to grips with these

irregularities. Neither consents nor risk assessments address the use of communication technology. However, in practice, policies are adhered to and the lack of paperwork has not led to a lower standard of care.

The introduction of an electronic medication stock level system has reduced the potential for calculation errors. It is conducted more regularly than the organisation's policy suggests, to be as safe as possible. This strategy of more than meeting standards applies in other areas of the home's management, such as the frequency of supervision for staff, which ensures that the six-weekly timescale is always met (save for absences from work).

Since the last inspection, staff turnover has reduced considerably, giving greater continuity of care, cohesion and confidence among the team. The staff group support each other by, for example, taking on additional shifts to cover for colleagues and pulling together to manage a crisis.

Examination of files demonstrates that safer recruitment practices are followed. New staff are supported by a thorough induction process and observation was made of staff being assisted by the manager to manage complex situations. In this way, children and young people benefit from adults working with them who are safe and competent.

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a private organisation in partnership with the local authority. It provides placements for up to six children and young people on long-term placements and a further six on short breaks. All are pupils at the school on the same site.

An after-school club is run at the school by the manager and staff of the home and is not registered under the Children's Homes Regulations.

The home was previously registered as a residential special school, becoming a children's home in July 2015.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/12/2015	Full inspection	Good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b)).	11/05/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to regular scrutiny, particularly to ensure that their use is fair and effective (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 9.36, page 46).
- All children's case records must be kept up to date, particularly in regard to assessments, including e-safety (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 14.3, page 62).
- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities and that written consents are obtained where necessary from those with parental responsibility (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 6.5, page 31).

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who 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.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children 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 4234, 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 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/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016