

SC489212

Registered provider: MacIntyre Academies
Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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 attend the academy on the same site.

Inspection date: 30 January 2018

Judgement at last inspection: Good

Date of last inspection: 3 May 2017

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 declined in effectiveness.

The home has not had a registered manager for more than 12 months and the current head of care was not able to complete his application for registration within the required 28 days, although this is now in place. These delays have resulted in the judgement of 'declined in effectiveness'. Nevertheless, progress has been made to improve the quality of care offered to children and young people. In addition, the head of care, senior management of the academy and staff team demonstrate a commitment to address the remaining weaknesses of the home.

There has been a significant turnover of staff in the last year. However, the current team reports a significant improvement in the level of support given to them since the head of care was appointed. They attribute development in practice to his initiative and an ability to draw on their own strengths and ideas. Team meeting minutes and notes from an 'away day' provide excellent evidence of his collective approach.

Staff members commented on how cohesive and friendly the team has become, sufficient to encourage at least one agency worker to join the permanent staff. Reliance on agency workers has reduced, following a successful round of recruitment; night-time and holiday

shifts are still frequently staffed by more than 50% temporary staff but these are mostly people who are well known to the children and young people. In addition, realistic projections indicate that the regulation regarding this will be complied with in a matter of months.

Training is available to all staff, temporary or permanent, but the former do not have access to level 3 diploma courses. As some have worked in the home for more than two years, the home has not met the regulation regarding mandatory qualifications.

Information regarding the training undertaken by staff is difficult to obtain using the current system, for example on how many staff have a current first-aid training certificate. As several attended a very recent course, there is evidence that the home does have sufficient first aiders, but it is not easy to clarify this exactly. Senior managers are aware of this issue.

Scrutiny of recruitment files during the inspection revealed that ensuring that gaps in employment histories are accounted for continues to be overlooked in some cases. Reminders to staff involved in the selection process has not always resulted in them obtaining the information. In addition, requests for references do not include asking previous employers for information about why staff left jobs that included working with children or vulnerable adults.

A striking improvement made since the last inspection has been in the development of systematic methods of obtaining children's views, principally using 'social stories'. Examples are the gathering of views about the activities they wanted to undertake during the recent school holiday and about food for Christmas dinner. These were combined to form the equivalent of a house meeting, the results of which staff then acted on. In addition, staff have recorded the response of three children to a meal they disliked (one using a symbol to indicate it was 'bad') as a complaint. The record lacked detail to demonstrate that the outcome was satisfactory. There is a commitment to take the views of children who have limited means of communication seriously and to improve their experiences while living at the home.

The provider's complaints policy has not changed to give staff guidance on how to manage children's complaints; however, senior managers acknowledge the need to learn from practice to formulate suitable procedures. This includes simple forms for children to inform staff of any incidents of bullying and of complaints.

The behaviour management policy states that 'Sanctions are not an appropriate response to behaviour for our young people...' but at the last inspection staff exhibited confusion over this and the manager was doubtful that sanctions had not been used since. The use of a log to record such methods of discipline has lapsed and so he is unable to monitor their use.

Records of restrictive physical interventions demonstrate a significant reduction in staff holding children and young people. A number of factors have contributed to this, but a concerted effort to improve communication, increasing choices and a more stable staff team that knows the young people well and so is able to avert problems have all played

a part.

The manager has recently introduced a system for setting targets for children and young people and recording their progress. This breaks down a skill, such as washing hair, into small steps and measures the amount of assistance provided by staff to help a young person achieve it. This is described as 'a work in progress', as there are ambitions to integrate targets agreed in the school setting and to involve others, such as parents and carers and the young people themselves, in devising them.

The manager's review of the quality of care shows that many of the actions previously set have not been achieved, and there is little evaluation of the impact of changes made or events that have occurred in the reporting period. The review does not explicitly address the quality standards, and actions are not set in a way that allows their success to be easily measured. However, a comprehensive audit of the service has resulted in a number of initiatives that senior managers are in the process of implementing. These have clear aims and timescales.

The home's location assessment primarily remains an evaluation of risks and does not identify advantages such as local facilities that make the location suitable for the home.

The manager and staff have undertaken work to improve the quality of case files. This is most clearly seen in excellent behaviour support plans and positive handling plans. All key documents were up to date and identified their author. Daily logs, though, have no space for workers to give their name, and the quality and completeness of the record varies widely. Placement plans do not explicitly include children's views.

In an attempt to avoid duplication, the home is now using the local authority's paperwork for consents, but managers did not realise that this does not include permission given by a person with parental authority for first aid to be administered.

Staff and managers commented on the work done to help young people who move from the home to other provisions and how this has been improved by the introduction of a transition worker. This includes close liaison with parents, preparation of the young person concerned and collaboration with new providers. As was the case at the last full inspection, none of this was evidenced in the case file sampled of the young person who had most recently moved. Nevertheless, managers are developing holistic thinking about transition, so that plans take into account learning and social care needs not just in the immediate future but well into adulthood.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/05/2017	Full	Good
01/11/2016	Full	Good
13/04/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/12/2015	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, 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
<p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person is required to:</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child,</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, that agency staff meet the requirements regarding mandatory qualifications and that the home’s workforce plan details the process and timescales for supervision of practice for agency staff. Also to ensure that no more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night, at the home are from an external agency.</p>	30/05/2018
<p>The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children’s home if the individual satisfies the requirement that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(2)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, a full employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation in writing of any gaps in employment, should be obtained.</p>	01/02/2018
<p>The registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. (Regulation 39(1))</p> <p>In particular, the policy should include managing complaints made by or on behalf of children who cannot or do not verbalise.</p>	30/05/2018

Recommendations

- Each child should have permission for staff to administer first aid and non-prescription medication from a person with parental responsibility for them recorded in their relevant plan. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 35 paragraph 7.14)

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the general principles for behaviour management in children's homes are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
In particular, the registered person should maintain a log of any sanctions imposed by staff.
- The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)
In particular ensure that this work is adequately recorded.
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- All children's case records must be kept up to date, and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person's review of the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13(2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the quality standards as described in regulations 5 to 14. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraphs 15.2)

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: SC489212

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: MacIntyre Academies

Registered provider address: MacIntyre Care, 602 South Seventh Street, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK9 2JA

Responsible individual: Sumerjit Ram

Registered manager: Post vacant.

Inspector

Chris Peel, social care inspector

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding 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 1231, 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 <http://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 <http://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: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018