

1226969

Registered provider: Action for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This registered charity-operated children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The manager has been in post since January 2018 and was registered with Ofsted in January 2019.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 July 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 July 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/05/2017	Full	Good
16/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The good quality of care provided at this home enables children to have positive experiences. Two children have been admitted since the last inspection and two have recently moved into adult provisions. All the children have complex needs and some are non-verbal. The staff work well with families and professionals to establish each child's preferred method of communication.

Children develop good relationships with staff because of the one-to-one work that staff do with them. The staff are great advocates for the children. They spend time with the children to gain their views through the use of scripts and symbols and observing body language. The staff encourage the children to make choices and congratulate them warmly on their achievements.

The staff enable the children to go on outings and activities that they would not usually have the chance to do. The children learn about what they enjoy and benefit from opportunities to experience new activities. This increases their confidence and helps them to develop their social skills.

The children attend local schools, and attendance levels are high. School staff and the home's staff work closely together to help the children to achieve well. The staff share daily updates, which mean that each can prepare appropriately for their time with the children based on their changing daily presentations.

Staff understand the importance of family relationships. They work well with parents and social workers. The manager is proactive in her discussion with families, which enables her to make alternative arrangements when issues occur. This approach ensures that the children maintain relationships with those who are important to them.

Transitions are a strength at this home. Moves in and out of the home are carefully managed and well organised. Placement matching is researched and considered. The children visit several times to familiarise themselves with the home prior to moving in. When the time comes for moving into adult provisions, staff accompany the young people on visits. The staff prepare them by using visual scripts that detail these planned visits. Social workers and parents all said that the staff exceed expectations in facilitating smooth transitions.

Recent improvements to the home's exterior provide a welcoming entry. The interior is well decorated, with in-house activities for children to enjoy, such as a sensory room, art and crafts, and a private garden equipped with specialised swing and trampoline.

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

Children who have complex needs are safely cared for and protected from possible dangers. The children can present with self-injurious behaviour and display aggressive behaviour towards staff. All staff are trained in behaviour management techniques. Physical intervention is only used when necessary to keep the children and staff safe.

Risk assessments are thorough and give guidance on how to reduce risks. These assessments equip staff with the knowledge required to recognise the individual stressors for each child. High levels of supervision ensure that staff can de-escalate incidents quickly.

The manager provides good oversight of the detailed incident reports. However, the system used for differentiating between incidents and physical intervention incidents is overcomplicated. Unclear recording and filing may prevent staff having immediate access to necessary information on previous incidents.

Staff are in tune with the children and nurturing in their approach. Parents spoken with during the inspection said that their children are happy and relaxed in staff's company. A parent of a young person who recently moved on said, 'The staff knew everything about him, more than I did. As a mother, that gave me such piece of mind. I couldn't have asked for more. They were so good at updating me. They put my mind at rest. [My child] was always happy to be there.'

Managers have good relationships with safeguarding professionals and social workers. When a concern arises, managers notify the appropriate professional promptly. There has been one safeguarding incident requiring involvement from the designated officer since the last inspection. This was well managed and resolved effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The dedicated and suitably experienced manager registered with Ofsted in January 2019. She is near to achieving a relevant level 5 diploma.

The manager is well supported by the deputy manager, and together they run a good-quality service. Staff described the managers as very approachable and having the necessary skills to support them. One staff member said, 'This is a well-organised home. Managers take staff well-being very seriously.' The staff feel valued in their roles.

Staff are now receiving regular supervision and yearly appraisals. The managers encourage the staff to acknowledge any difficulties and identify any further support that they might need. This helps staff to reflect on and increase their skills to continually meet the changing needs of the children.

The staff receive regular training. The manager is proactive in ensuring that staff attend good-quality courses. However, the record of training does not include all the courses undertaken or clearly prompt when updates are required. This makes it difficult for staff to track their training or to identify further courses that they need.

Professionals were very complimentary about the positive improvements in communication. An education professional said, 'The staff have massively upped their game. Good handovers are so important for children to make progress at school. I'm really happy now.'

The home's statement of purpose has been updated to reflect changes to practice. Recent amendments have resulted in updates to the staffing arrangements. However, this version was not submitted to Ofsted as required by regulation.

The manager has met to good effect the four requirements and five recommendations set at the last inspection.

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>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>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))</p>	30/08/2019

Recommendations

- Implement a workforce plan or training plan that details the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording, and that information regarding the child is 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)

In particular, ensure that children's incident records are well maintained and clearly filed.

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: 1226969

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Action for Children

Registered provider address: 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, Watford, Hertfordshire
WD18 8AG

Responsible individual: Stephen Sipple

Registered manager: Andreia Alves Da Silva

Inspector

Lynne Drage, social care inspector

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