

2510323

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home, which is run by a private organisation, looks after children with learning disabilities who are aged 11 to 18.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 4 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/08/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The staff provide outstanding care to children. The staff show understanding, kindness and patience when supporting the children. Children have complex communication needs, and the staff use extremely creative ways to help children express themselves and make choices. Staff build trusting relationships with the children, and this empowers children to have a voice. Children's wishes and feelings are held in high regard and actioned. The manager models to the staff the importance of advocating for children. The children feel valued, respected and safe.

Staff go above and beyond expectations to support the children. This support has enabled children to excel in their education. The children have specialist education places. The staff have enabled one child to attend school by supporting the child on site. A specialist extra-curriculum coordinator ensures that the children's targets from school are worked on at the home. Teachers said that communication with the home is excellent, and that the staff do a fantastic job in supporting the children. These levels of support ensure that children make excellent progress and that their learning continues at the home.

The staff ensure that children benefit from important family time with those who are important to them. A separate building at the home has enabled safe family time during the COVID-19 restrictions. The staff have taken time to build trust with the children's families. Parents said that their children are happy and safe. One parent said, 'My child has truly blossomed since living at the home.' Parents feel assured that their children are receiving excellent child-centred care.

Staff encourage children to develop independent living skills. The staff support children to enjoy cooking and baking. One child records a weekly cookery video. The staff help children to learn about budgeting, personal hygiene and life skills at an appropriate level. Children have the opportunity to attend an external life skills programme. Promoting independence skills means that children are well prepared when they move on from the home.

Staff encourage children to try new activities and to join clubs. Children take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, cadets and youth groups. The staff encourage children to meet new people and learn new skills. One of the children has made a new friend from attending cadets. Giving children these opportunities improves their self-esteem, encourages them to experience new activities and enables them to form new friendships.

Staff meet the children's complex health needs well. The staff have specific training from healthcare specialists. The staff have worked hard to help a child to manage a healthcare need independently, which has led to the child no longer being reliant on staff support during the day. The child is very proud of this, and staff were observed

celebrating with the child. Such achievements empower children and increase their independence.

Staff create monthly photographic booklets for children to capture their life journey. The booklets are shared with parents, social workers and children to highlight the children's memories and achievements.

The home is spacious and welcoming and feels like a family home. The staff are extremely nurturing, and the children thrive in this environment. The children benefit from several separate rooms that are used to meet their sensory needs. Children's bedrooms are highly personalised to their own taste and fully meet their individual needs.

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

The manager ensures that allegations are dealt with promptly and effectively. On one occasion, an allegation was made by a member of staff in relation to a taxi chaperone. The manager facilitated the child's journey to and from school until an appropriate chaperone was found. The manager ensured that the new chaperone shadowed staff, to enable them to fully understand the child's needs. The manager followed up the allegation and insisted on outcomes from the designated officer. Taking such action keeps children safe and demonstrates how seriously the manager takes safeguarding concerns.

There has been one incident of a child going missing from the home. The staff acted quickly, prevented any harm to the child and kept her safe. Staff managed the incident very well. When this child moved from the home, the manager ensured that the staff took the child to the new provision to help her feel secure. The staff have kept in contact with the child. Supporting children in this way prevents avoidable harm, immediately responds to their physical and emotional needs, and makes them feel valued and cared for.

There are no bullying concerns at the home. The home adopts a zero-tolerance approach towards bullying. Staff support children on an individual basis to understand which interactions are appropriate with each other. One child was bullied before living at the home. The staff have supported and nurtured the child. He has made impressive progress with his self-esteem and confidence and met his goal to go horse-riding.

There has been one incident of physical intervention. This was appropriate, necessary and proportionate. The manager ensured that the staff involved had a debrief and explored how to prevent recurrence. The child was supported to express how he felt and to make sense of the incident. Being open to learning from incidents and supporting children in this way have meant that there have been no further physical interventions.

The manager and staff benefit from the input of a positive behaviour support coach. The coach oversees children's behaviour plans and helps staff to reflect on incidents. The children's plans focus on positive behaviour reinforcement and include the children's views. The plans comprehensively guide staff on how to support children. Children have developed coping strategies to manage their emotions and behaviour. There has been a decrease in negative and self-harming behaviours. As a result of this, one child has been able to reduce their medication intake.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager's skills and experience enable highly effective management of staff, and ensure that exceptional care is provided for the children. The manager has a relevant level 5 qualification.

The staff team is consistent and stable. Staff feel supported and valued by the manager. The staff receive regular supervision that is effective and gives them good guidance. Supporting staff in this way helps to retain staff and enables them to provide good care for children.

The manager has ensured that staff are provided with excellent training opportunities. A specialist psychologist provides a monthly reflective learning space that underpins staff development. Occupational therapists contribute to care plans for children. They provide training to staff to enable them to understand and implement these plans. The manager has also planned training that is experiential and gives an insight into how children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) experience the world. High-quality training means that staff have the tools and knowledge to provide individualised, informed care.

The manager carefully matches children, and will not move children into the home if the move is likely to negatively influence the children already living there. Children who are new to the home initially move into a self-contained flat. This gives children time and space to adjust and allows for a gradual introduction. Good matching means that children experience limited disruption. A gradual transition from the flat means that children can adjust to change.

The manager supported the police to talk to a child. The manager spent time with the officer to ensure that the child's understanding and communication needs were met. Working in partnership with the police meant that the child could fully engage and understand the information given. Children are helped to feel comfortable and confident with authority figures.

The manager has created effective monitoring tools and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home. These monitoring tools are used to review the home's progress regularly. Good oversight of the home ensures that ongoing improvements are made.

The manager has incorporated relevant research, specifically related to ASD, into practice. Two staff members have a level 2 certificate in understanding ASD, and this

learning has been disseminated to the staff. A staff member has completed a dissertation on ASD, and this has been delivered as a presentation to the staff. This research gives staff a deeper understanding of ASD and has been used to inform practice.

The manager generally keeps good records and has oversight of these. On one occasion, the manager had not ensured that staff had clearly recorded consistent information in a child's records. Inconsistent information makes the child's record inaccurate and unclear.

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

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Specifically, ensure that body maps are consistent with written records. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2510323

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

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

Responsible individual: Maria Fiddimore

Registered manager: Luke Cunniff

Inspector

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector

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