

SC489212

Registered provider: MacIntyre Academies

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a private organisation in partnership with the local authority. The home provides placements for children with disabilities and young people who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder that might result in behaviours of concern. The home accommodates up to six children and young people permanently, and up to six children and young people under short-break arrangements.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 September 2021

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 good

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

Date of last inspection: 5 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/11/2019	Full	Good
13/09/2018	Full	Good
03/05/2017	Full	Good
01/11/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All children are making good progress. Children are supported and cared for by empathic, patient and motivated staff. Inventive and creative ways to capture progress of children are shared through photographs with family and professionals. As a result, family members have enjoyed seeing the achievements made by their children.

Children who are not able to communicate verbally are encouraged by staff to use their preferred methods of communication, for example pictures or symbols. Staff provided inspectors with equipment to assist in the communication with children. This enabled the children, supported by staff, to interact and share their feelings independently with inspectors.

An independent advocate attends the home once a month and spends time with the children. Managers act promptly on any issues or worries that the advocate raises as a result of her visits. This ensures that children's voices are heard and that they are listened too, which enables positive change and supports the continuity of the secure relationships between children and staff.

Staff pay attention to cultural and religious needs of the children and ensure that these needs are met. For example, one child attends church every Sunday with his family. If required, a member of staff will accompany him and his family to church. As a result, children and their families continue to enjoy time together outside of the home. Staff make sure that children have a healthy, balanced diet that takes into account their faith and religion.

The home requires some maintenance. Despite considerable effort by staff and managers, there is still work to be completed. The home, in places, is not welcoming or homely. For example, the appearance on the landings and upstairs corridors are clinical in appearance. Consequently, these areas do not offer a feeling of warmth or colour for the children.

The children have access to a range of activities in the home, school and community. All children attend the on-site school and are making good progress. Children benefit from close collaborative working between teaching and care staff. This means that children get to practise the skills that they learn at school when they are at home, and it also means that they get a consistent experience of care in both settings. This helps them learn.

Staff provide excellent support for all the children to attend health appointments; this includes opticians and specialist health services. In one example, the vigilance and determination of the staff in seeking advice led to a diagnosis of a life-threatening illness for one child. He is now in remission and enjoying his time in the home and with his family.

Professionals say that staff are committed, caring and that the children are well looked after. Parents of children who live in the home and those who come for short breaks consistently report that they feel that their children receive good standards of care. The staff know the children well and understand their individual needs. As a result, children are happy and look forward to coming to stay at the home.

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

Staff are attentive and observant in the way that they care for children. For example, staff recognise when children are feeling overwhelmed or upset; staff achieve a good balance between keeping children safe and allowing children to take acceptable risks in order to learn to become more independent. However, there are some areas in the home that require maintenance to ensure that children are not exposed to environmental risks, such as a part-exposed ceiling and incomplete plastering around a light switch.

Behaviour management plans for the children are detailed and help staff to provide consistent, nurturing care. Children respond well to this and, when they are anxious or upset, staff are able to help them manage their feelings and behaviours. Staff are generally able to calm situations to avoid incidents and only use physical intervention when absolutely necessary to prevent harm.

Specific training to ensure children are safeguarded has been completed by staff, for example how to keep the children safe in the community, reporting concerns in relation to staff practice and how to respond to prevent a child from harming themselves or others.

Not all staff have completed mandatory training; however, there are plans in place to enable staff to complete this at the earliest opportunity. There have been some medication errors, and records in relation to the administration of medication is not up to date. Although there is no impact on the children, this has not been identified by managers as an area that requires further scrutiny and review.

Staff are thoroughly checked and vetted prior to working in the home to ensure that they are suitably experienced and of good character. The staff team is diverse and has a range of qualifications and experience that provides the children with support and care that meet their needs with regard to their culture and ethnicity.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is currently without a registered manager; however, senior managers have recently been successful in recruiting a new manager. The deputy manager is competent, passionate and has high aspirations for the children. They have good oversight of day-to-day care practice and make sure that children receive good standards of care.

Overall, there is good oversight by management and senior leaders of the quality of care provided to children. Regular team meetings and managers' meetings discuss

topics that are relevant to children and staff practice. However, staff reported that managers were not always effective in the way that they ensure that agreed strategies to improve practice are fully embedded across the team.

Not all staff have received regular supervision. Those that have completed show little reflective practice. Therefore, the requirement set at the previous inspection is considered not met and will be repeated.

Incidents that the leaders and managers consider to be serious are shared with the relevant professionals; however, there has been occasions when the incorrect processes have been used and this has created delay or omission in notifying Ofsted when incidents occur. Nonetheless, the necessary action has been taken to ensure that children are safeguarded appropriately.

The independent visitor provides an additional layer of scrutiny and reflection. Senior leaders make good use of feedback from the independent visitor to inform service development plans. As a result, staff are learning how to improve practice, systems and better evidence the progress made by children.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health.</p> <p>Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)</p>	31 December 2021
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children’s home.</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. Regulation 23 (1) (2)(c)</p>	31 January 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. Regulation 33 (4)(b)</p> <p>In particular, ensure that regular supervision is in line with the home’s supervision policy.</p>	31 January 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children’s homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children; they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

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: 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: Michaela Soporova

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector (Lead)
Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector

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