

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 not for profit company in partnership with the local authority. The home provides placements for children with disabilities and with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. The home provides residential care and short-break arrangements. There were six children receiving a service from the home at the time of the inspection.

A school operates on the same site as this children's home. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on this site.

There has been no registered manager in post since March 2023.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 2 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2022	Full	Good
16/05/2022	Full	Inadequate
21/09/2021	Full	Good
05/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, a significant number of staff, including leaders and managers, have left the home. At times, agency staff have been required to help cover shifts. However, staff recruitment is an improving picture. For example, the night staff are now all permanent, and some agency staff have been recruited to the home.

Some staff are longer serving. They know the children well and speak positively about the difference short-break visits make to the children and their families. Staff advocate for the children in order for them to access the service.

Children who use both short breaks and who have become permanent residents make progress as a direct result of the care they receive. A social worker described some children's progress as not previously thought possible, explaining, '[Name of child] is able to go out in the community now, she wasn't able to do that before.'

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that enrich their experiences, such as visiting a local farm, the beach and cinema, to name but a few. However, some staff observe children rather than join in with the activities the children enjoy in the home. In addition, staff do not eat meals with the children, creating an institutional feel.

Children's bedrooms are specially designed to cater to their needs and interests. All bedrooms are personalised and provide safe spaces for children to relax in. However, children cannot access all parts of the home without staff using a fob to release the doors. This prevents children from independently using the communal areas and restricts their movement around the home. This was addressed at the time of the inspection.

Children's complex health needs are generally well managed. When medication errors have occurred, practice changes as a result to reduce future risk. However, one child has their controlled medication administered in their food. The provider has not assessed the risk around this or sought permission or advice from the prescriber to administer the medication in this way. Furthermore, there was no patient information available for the controlled drug.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There are gaps in safeguarding practice. Although they have not yet impacted on the children, they have the potential to do so. For example, there was a significant incident for one child when out in the community. Although several staff spoke knowledgeably about the event, no record could be found on the system used to

record safeguarding incidents. As a result, it was not possible to accurately review what actions were taken and by who.

Allegations against staff are investigated and are well managed. The use of a chronology, the scope of the investigation and clear outcomes ensure that any concerns are fully addressed.

Restraint is used as a last resort. The records are captured in two separate places and, at times, are variable in quality. Previous managerial oversight failed to identify shortfalls in records, such as gaps in recording and children not consistently having debriefs following a restraint. The current manager is aware that this practice does not meet the requirements and has identified how debriefs can be completed with children to meet their needs. Consideration is being given to the duplication of recording restraints and how this can be improved.

One child has diagnosed food allergies. An inspector intervened when they observed a staff member attempt to prepare food alongside food the child was said to be allergic to. A risk management plan has not been devised in relation to the food allergies. Therefore, it was not clear that the child had an intolerance to this particular food rather than a severe allergy. Consequently, this could lead to inconsistent practice in managing this risk. However, there is a comprehensive allergy action plan that staff follow should the child have a reaction to the food that they are allergic to.

Each child has a personal emergency evacuation plan. However, it is not clear if all staff understand these individual plans. A night-time drill recently took place. However, learning about the children's ability to safely exit was not captured. This was a missed opportunity to learn from the children's experiences and improve strategies that reduce risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager and deputy manager no longer work at the home. The provider has appointed a new manager who has been working in this role since March 2023. Leaders and the new manager are aware of their responsibility to ensure that the home has a registered manager in post. In addition to this, two leadership roles remain vacant.

The manager makes a positive impact on this provision. Staff speak highly regarding her visibility, support and dedication to the children. A social worker also said, '[name] is great and had made such a positive impact since she arrived and communicates well with the parents.' However, the manager's ability to fulfil the managerial tasks required for this busy provision is hampered by the vacant leadership roles.

Although staffing has improved since the previous inspection, agency staff are frequently used. For some agency staff who work regularly with one child, supervision is provided. However, staff supervision is not consistently provided to all

agency staff. This is a missed opportunity to reliably reflect on safeguarding, children's progress and staff performance with all the staff working at the home. At the time of the inspection, a new supervision policy had been developed to address this but had not yet been implemented.

The staff spoke positively about the training provided. They say they feel well equipped to care for the children. However, two staff have not completed the required level 3 qualification within the required timescale.

Managerial oversight is weak. Despite the best efforts of the manager, gaps in oversight continue. A new responsible individual has been in post since April 2023. He does not demonstrate effective oversight. Frequently, documents are signed but not dated, and poor quality or incomplete records are not recognised or addressed. For example, a range of restraint records had been signed off as being reviewed. However, other than the signature, the records did not capture or identify that required information was missing.

Governors have revised the methods of oversight. However, an overreliance on data and a failure to fully understand the context around it, has not revealed the shortfalls identified in this 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>Specifically, that children can access all relevant areas of the home and that the staff have the skills to engage the children in activities.</p>	23 July 2023
<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 staff—</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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(d))</p>	23 July 2023

<p>Specifically, that arrangements to meet children’s individual needs are consistently risk assessed and that all staff are aware of the measures to reduce risk.</p>	
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(h))</p> <p>This requirement is repeated from the previous inspection.</p>	<p>23 July 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children’s home. (Regulation 23 (1))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that the prescriber gives written permission for administering medication in food.</p>	<p>23 July 2023</p>
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure fire drills take place and the records detail the learning from each drill.</p>	<p>23 July 2023</p>
<p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children’s home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home;</p> <p>and the registered provider—</p> <p>is an organisation or a partnership;</p>	<p>23 July 2023</p>

<p>does not satisfy regulation 28; or</p> <p>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a) (b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, the manager needs to apply to register with Ofsted.</p>	
<p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home</p> <p>If the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))</p>	<p>31 August 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record</p>	<p>23 July 2023</p>

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c))

This requirement is repeated from the previous inspection.

Recommendation

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including agency staff and the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: Seebeck House, 1 Seebeck Place, Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK5 8FR

Responsible individual: Andrew Moran

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector

Lisa O'Donovan, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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