

SC457423

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for five children who may have special educational needs, social and/or communication difficulties, autism or a combination of these.

The home has not had a registered manager since July 2023. An application to register a new manager was received by Ofsted in February 2024.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2024

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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: 10 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/01/2023	Full	Good
15/06/2021	Full	Good
08/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
26/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home. The children are happy and very settled. Two children have moved into the home since the last inspection. The staff plan well for children moving into the home; the needs and potential risks for all of the children are considered. When there were safety concerns that staff could not safely manage, a child was moved quickly. These decisions were made to ensure that all children were safeguarded.

The children enjoy a wide range of positive experiences that support their individual preferences. This includes regular trips out, bowling, rugby, going out for food and helping in the local community by taking the bins out for neighbours. This helps children to build their confidence and social skills.

Staff encourage the children to go to school. They all have very good attendance records and are making progress from their starting points. When the children talk about school, they are enthusiastic about their experiences.

Staff support the children to attend all of their health appointments. Children are encouraged to eat healthily, and they enjoy cooking a variety of nutritious meals with staff. They have access to a school nurse and professionals who support the children with their emotional well-being.

Staff use a variety of techniques to understand the wishes and feelings of the children. Recently, staff have been trained to use a choice-based activity that is designed to encourage children to express their feelings. This is individualised and links to the child's interests. One child was able to immerse himself in the activity, expressing his likes and dislikes regarding sporting activities. This form of communication will provide him with a much broader way to show people how easy it is to understand his needs.

The children enjoy trusting relationships with staff. There is music and laughter at the house. A parent said, 'We know he is loved. We know that he cannot make up the affection that he has for the staff and the home.'

When staff record children's activities, the photos of the day are not of a high quality. The children's story books lack detail and are not addressed to the child. These fail to provide a special, good-quality memento of the child's time at the home.

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

Staff provide children with a warm, loving environment. They understand the emotional and physical needs of the children. Staff are innovative in meeting children's needs and create a safe and secure environment.

Behavioural incidents are dealt with calmly using strategies provided by the therapeutic team. Staff rarely use physical intervention. When it is used, it is appropriate, proportionate and supports children while they are redirected. Incidents are recorded well, with reflective management oversight. As a team, the staff explore incidents to help them understand and respond with consistency to unwanted behaviours.

The manager and staff are learning how trauma affects the children they care for. Staff receive regular therapeutic support in team meetings. This helps them explore strategies that can be directly applied in the home. They confidently address emerging behaviours and help children to understand how to express their feelings and emotions in a structured and reliable environment.

Staff confidently manage safeguarding concerns. They apply risk assessments using established processes. Children are supported to take appropriate risks by staff who know them well. As a result, children are enjoying becoming more confident and independent.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home has not had a registered manager since July 2023. The responsible individual was unable to successfully recruit for the post until recently. Combined with a significant delay in the manager's application being submitted, there has been no registered manager for seven months. The new manager is applying to register. He is studying for the level 5 qualification in leadership and management and has ample experience in residential childcare.

Staff are very positive about the new manager. The manager strongly advocates for developing practice with the staff team. There are established and new career opportunities, including a new therapeutic support course. This will help new managers and support workers develop their understanding of how to apply therapeutic models of care. Staff welcome the chance to use the techniques being taught by the therapeutic lead.

Effective working between the manager, staff and the wider professional network helps foster positive working relationships. Managers attend multi-agency risk and safeguarding meetings, which help support communication between agencies. One social worker said he always visits at the end of the day so that he can see how the child is. He said he can see that the child is thriving at the home.

The new manager knows the staff team well. He and the team leader provide regular supervision sessions that are an opportunity for staff to have time to talk about their work and their emotional well-being. Staff say that they enjoy this time, which is reflective. The manager is encouraging staff to be more involved in the development of the home, including reviewing risk assessments, developing the staff team and exploring and resolving practice issues.

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, The 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 staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii))</p>	<p>23 February 2024</p>

Recommendation

- 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. Information about the child must always be 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)

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: SC457423

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

Registered provider address: Seebeck House, 1 Seebeck Place, Milton Keynes
MK5 8FR

Responsible individual: Jennifer Marshall

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Trudy Potter, Social Care Inspector

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