

SC457423

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for five children who have learning disabilities. A charitable organisation owns and operates the home. The organisation provides a separately registered education facility, which is based locally.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 June 2017

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: 17 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The children are becoming increasingly independent.

- The children are becoming more able to interact with each other and with people in the community.
- The children are achieving exceptionally high levels of school attendance.
- Parents and family members are positive about the care that the children receive.
- Children receive care from a consistent and committed team of staff who know them very well.
- Children have positive, gradual transitions into and out of the home.
- The staff use personalised social stories and scripts to establish the children's routines.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The requirement from the last inspection, to ensure that eligible staff hold a relevant level 3 qualification, has not been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/11/2016	Full	Good
14/09/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/01/2016	Full	Good
23/07/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
The registered person must ensure that an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification, the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) (‘the level 3 diploma’), or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma, by the relevant date. (Regulation 32(4)(5))	31/12/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The house is extremely homely and offers an environment in which the children are totally at ease. The children make full use of the various areas to spend time on their own or in the company of the other children. A family member said, ‘It is a lovely big house. He [child] has a view over the garden [from his bedroom], like at home. He loves the swing. He will give a thumbs up and a nod because he is happy to go back.’

Many of the children are non-verbal or have very limited speech. Information boards show the children’s rewards and certificates of achievement. There is pictorial information, detailing topics such as which staff members are working that day. The children use scripts and social stories to enable them to follow their plans for the day. Symbols on various cupboards and appliances indicate the contents and their uses to the children, to enable the children to use rooms, such as the kitchen, independently. The staff remain available to assist and supervise the children. This familiarity with their surroundings is helping the children to become increasingly self-reliant.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved in. He had a successful, gradual transition into the home that included teatime visits and overnight stays. This approach has enabled him to settle in, and it has assisted the other children to become familiar with him. A similarly gradual approach is in progress for a child who is due to move out in the coming months. The manager and the child’s family have visited a number of placements to identify one that is similar to the home. A relative of the child said, ‘They [the manager and a senior member of staff] came and looked at the places with us. I

appreciate their input, as he lives with them.' The joint viewings have enabled the identification of a placement that everyone, including the child, is happy with.

The children have exceptionally high levels of school attendance, which ranges from 97.5% to 99%. Education plays a vital part in the children's routines. The children's progress reports demonstrate that the children often present with different behaviours at home than at school. The school staff and the care staff communicate regularly, either in person or via communication books, to set joint targets. The care staff and school staff share this information with the children's families, to help to ensure that the children receive consistent approaches.

Key-work sessions occur each Sunday, and the children are encouraged to express any concerns that they may have. The staff use the sessions to review the children's household targets with them. These targets focus on enabling the children to learn to complete tasks that will help them in their adult life.

The children are increasing their interactions with each other at home and in the community. One child was able to invite another to go shopping for new bed linen with him. This is something that he was unable to do at the time of the last inspection. They went, accompanied by the staff, and returned having had a great time out. Another child had been out toy shopping, with a staff member, at local shops. The staff member spoke positively about how the child was able to go into the shops and calmly select his items. The staff member said, 'They [the staff in the shops] all knew the child's name and that he likes to scan his items himself.' These 'everyday' experiences promote the children's social interactions and form part of their travel training.

The staff actively seek the children's views. Using various forms of communication, the children choose their activities for the week and select a meal of their choice. On the day that the staff are cooking the child's selected meal, the child helps with the food preparations and serving the meal. This enables the child to have a sense of pride that everyone is eating something that they have chosen and helped to cook. The staff actively listen to and act upon the children's views, thereby ensuring that the children have an active part in the running of the home.

The interactions between the staff and children demonstrate that they enjoy being in each other's company. One child was busily making a birthday card for a staff member who was due in later that day. He was beaming when he saw how happy she was with the card. When asked how he was feeling, the child selected the 'I am happy' symbol. When asked what he did yesterday, he demonstrated his improved vocal ability by replying, 'Rollercoaster. Seaside.'

The children continue to make extremely good overall progress. It is clear, through their participation in household tasks and their growing independence with their personal care, that they are becoming increasingly independent. The children take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, such as attending a youth club and swimming. Each child has a vast number of scrapbooks that show pictures of them participating in activities and outings. A family member said, 'He is doing lots of lovely things, like swimming and

outings. They [the staff] are encouraging his independent life skills, such as mopping and polishing his bedroom. So when he comes home, he will lay things out for breakfast. When at home, I usually do everything for him but he can do so much more now. I am really happy and really impressed.'

The staff support the children to attend their health appointments. The staff have been creative by using used cod liver oil tablets to assist a child to learn how to take tablets. He has now progressed to slow-release tablets that greatly assist with managing his epilepsy. One of the child's relatives said, 'He is epileptic and was taking medicine; we wanted him on tablets. The home was brilliant. They [the staff] took over responsibility and gave him multi-vitamins daily to get him used to swallowing, and he was able to change medication. In consultation with his epilepsy consultant, he then needed the slow-release medication. They [the staff] have got him onto it by using cod liver oil tablets to teach him not to chew. They [the staff] are fantastic.'

Another parent spoke of her son's depression prior to moving into the home. She said, 'I just want a happy son. He had been depressed and sectioned. They [the staff] are superb, and he has never been down again since. I couldn't sing their praises highly enough.'

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

The manager undertakes compatibility risk assessments when considering new admissions. These risk assessments highlight any positive or negative changes that may arise in the group dynamics. The moves into the home are gradual to minimise any potential disruption to the children's routines.

The use of physical holds is minimal, and the manager monitors this to assess the effectiveness of the interventions. The staff manage and track incidents and changes in behaviour effectively. They use discussions with the team and the wider organisation to identify patterns and triggers. The manager and the staff then agree any required changes in procedures, to provide the children with a consistent and effective response to their behaviours.

Although the children do not go missing from home, the staff are familiar with the procedures that they should follow if an incident occurs.

Each child has a personal emergency evacuation plan that is stored within easy reach of the fire exits. The plans are contained in fire bags that hold the information and equipment required in the event of a fire evacuation. The manager tests the staff during team meetings, to ensure that they are aware, prior to a fire, of the contents of each child's plan.

The staff use the children's household targets to assist them with becoming increasingly safe, such as when using knives when cooking. The staff and children walk locally and

use public transport as part of the children's travel training. This is with the aim of enhancing the children's ability to travel safely and independently.

The staff use social stories and scripts with the children to explore whether the children have any worries or concerns. They use them to teach the children not to copy any negative behaviour that they may observe. During the inspection, as one child's behaviour escalated, another child could be heard saying, '[His own name] don't copy [other child's name].' The repetition of this script enabled the child to acknowledge that he was aware of the change in the other child's mood, and also enabled him to walk away with his own mood unchanged.

The staff are acutely aware of the safeguarding procedures for all of the children, and the additional need to process allegations that have been made by a specific child. This child has made unsubstantiated allegations against staff members. When the manager received the allegations, she took appropriate and proportionate action. The manager has liaised with the designated officer and, together, they have developed a strategy for managing any potential future allegations. The agreed approach ensures that the staff listen to the children's views, as always, yet prevents the staff from experiencing unnecessary suspension from duty. The designated officer was positive about the staff, and described the home as, 'Very responsive. I have no concerns about his [the child's] vulnerability or about him being believed.'

Although the children are at minimal risk of radicalisation and extremism, the topic still forms a vital part of the staff team's safeguarding training. This ensures that the team maintains an awareness of current knowledge and strategies that safeguard the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is a qualified social worker and is undertaking a relevant level 5 qualification. She has a great understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, and she is using both her internal monitoring and the external monthly monitoring visits to drive improvement in the home. The home is meeting its objectives, as outlined in the statement of purpose, and provides a very homely and caring environment for the children.

Three staff have left the home and two have joined the team since the last inspection. The manager provides a supportive environment, and the staff said that they find their supervision supportive. A staff member described the manager as 'a great manager who is really good and really fair'.

The manager uses her understanding of the children's progress to work with their key workers, to ensure that the plans for the children remain current and effective. This includes the setting of ambitious and aspirational goals for the children. The children are cared for by a staff team that knows the children's likes, dislikes and needs very well.

The staff undertake a wide range of mandatory and developmental training. There is a training matrix that provides an overview of the courses undertaken, their expiry dates and the refresher courses. This enables the manager to ensure that the staff access the training that they need to improve their work, and to practise with current knowledge and information.

The only requirement made at the last inspection related to an eligible staff member completing the relevant level 3 qualification. The staff member has not yet completed the qualification, therefore the requirement is not met.

Feedback about the manager and her team's ability to work in partnership has been positive. Family members' comments included:

- '[Manager's name] as a manager is perfect and I would like to take her with me when he [child] moves. She cares about the boys, and that makes a difference. She is a hands-on manager who understands them [children].'
- 'There is much more communication now, and I am kept up to date with weekly reports.'

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: SC457423

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: Fiona Veitch

Registered manager: Jennifer Marshall

Inspector

Sonia Hay, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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