

SC043994

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is part of an independent school for children who have an autism spectrum disorder and/or severe learning disabilities. The home provides 20 placements in six houses. Two young people transitioning into adulthood currently reside in one of those houses.

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

We last visited this setting on 14 September 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 June 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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 21 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/07/2019	Full	Inadequate
09/10/2018	Full	Good
24/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children continue to make good progress. There are indicators of substantial progress for some children. For example, one child had a starting point of low activity, poor self-care and presentation. The same child is now accessing activities, maintaining basic care skills and has improved health. This is as a result of the care and support provided by dedicated and inventive staff.

Staff know the children well. Children are happy and settled and thrive on routine and the predictability of the care they receive. Children, including those who communicate non-verbally, are encouraged and supported by committed staff to learn and use other methods of communication, for example sign language or symbols. Children have built positive trusting relationships with staff that care for them. Significant incidents have reduced considerably and for one child, this has enabled their return to education. Another child is making plans to attend their prom.

Regular house meetings give the children a platform to share their wants, needs and views. For example, a sensory room had an item or picture chosen by each child, which evidences their involvement to make decisions and choices. Therefore, children have a sense of belonging in their individual homes.

Children are engaged in learning about new cultures. Staff use positive activities and communication aids to explain the purpose of the cultural celebrations. This allows children to have new experiences and a better understanding of the world and awareness of their individual identity.

Admissions to the home are planned and well managed. Children can get to know staff through careful planning, visits and communication with family members. Managers and staff take effective action to ensure that care planning is regularly reviewed with the appropriate professionals. Staff challenge effectively and act when they are concerned that decisions are not in children's best interests. As a result, many of the children have been living at the home long term. This provides stability, routine and informed planning for when they move into adulthood.

Transitions are managed well. Staff are committed to individual care plans and excellent work is carried out to support children with change. The needs of some children are more complex, and every effort is made to care for these children. Where this is not possible, creative, robust and bespoke planning is in place. This allows the child to have a smooth, informed transition with positive endings.

Staff assist children in making life-story books. These contain photos and details of memorable occasions, including celebrations and the child's journey through the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these vary in quality, with some missing milestone birthdays and other life events from the time spent living in the home.

Children are supported to attend health appointments. The multidisciplinary approach enables a consistent and informed approach by staff in caring for children. Regular professional meetings inform internal plans, which staff use to measure the progress children are making. As a result, children are well cared for and their needs are met.

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

The environment is well maintained, both inside the individual homes and their respective gardens. Improvements continue to be made to ensure that children are safe. For example, some doors have been appropriately fitted with electronic card or thumbprint access only. As a result, there have been no further incidents of children being able to leave the homes without staff being aware. These measures are designed to protect the safety and welfare of children who have complex needs.

Incidents resulting in physical intervention have further reduced. De-escalation techniques were witnessed by inspectors during the inspection. Staff also consult with professionals and parents when physical or medical intervention is used. This provides transparency in the care provided for children and allows the opportunity for staff to reflect on their own practice.

Staff are restorative and child-focused in reparation, often using social stories to explain the reason for intervention. However, behaviour plans are repetitive and lack clarity for some children. As a result, staff are not always consistent in managing children's behaviour; however, this does not increase the need for physical intervention.

The homes have good internet safety. Children and young people are prevented from accessing inappropriate or specific websites due to their vulnerability. A recent and ongoing cyber incident was managed well, and all necessary action was taken to safeguard staff and children.

The staff liaise effectively with other agencies, such as police and statutory agencies, to keep children safe. However, there are wide gaps in supervision to explore the context of safeguarding. Focus is on daily risks rather than contextual or wider safeguarding. Staff do not always recognise and understand that risks change as children progress and grow older.

Recruitment is ongoing, with some vacancies remaining. However, the provider is ensuring that there are always sufficient staff to cover. The policy for safer recruitment is followed by managers. This provides reassurance that the children and young people are cared for by staff that have undergone a rigorous process for suitability.

The registered manager and senior leaders manage, and action, any allegation or concern swiftly and in accordance with statutory guidance. Leaders are thorough in

investigations. Issues are managed sensitively, and thorough recording enables clarity and understanding of outcomes.

There are good systems in place to monitor health and safety. The COVID-19 controls are strict with clear routines in place in the school and homes. Routine checks are conducted to monitor the required elements, along with clear systems of accountability from senior leaders. As a result, children live in safe environments which promote their health and well-being.

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

Monitoring and review systems have improved. However, the oversight and quality assurance of these are not yet good enough to recognise shortfalls in staff practice. This includes those delegated with managerial responsibilities, for example supervision.

Not all staff receive regular supervision. Some supervising staff lack supervision knowledge and practice. Likewise, children may be at risk from poorly supervised staff. Staff do not have an in-depth knowledge of safeguarding and there is lack of scrutiny by managers and senior leaders to ensure that staff remain up to date and refreshed in legislation.

However, staff do have the skills and experience to undertake their roles. The registered manager uses a training matrix and reviews this monthly. However, there is a lack of auditing by senior leaders and managers to ensure that training is fully embedded in practice. The registered manager ensures that training provided is of good quality but fails to evaluate the impact this training has on the quality of care for children. Agency staff access the same training opportunities. This allows children to have a consistency from staff working with them.

Development plans have been created by leaders and managers. The initial plans are detailed, child-focused and creative. However, the scheduled review of these documents is very limited and there are no actions identified to progress the three areas of development.

The independent person's reports lack meaningful insight or consultation with children. There is no evidence of challenge by managers. This means that the management team is unable to use these reports as an additional layer of quality assurance. Similarly, the registered manager's own six-monthly reporting lacks detailed evaluation or analysis and does not identify learning or progress from the reporting period. Therefore, the requirement under Regulation 45 from the previous inspection has not been met. This is a missed opportunity by leaders and managers to provide information on the home's progress, learning and improvements in practice.

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 registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").</p> <p>(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3))</p>	30 September 2021
<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>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	30 September 2021

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person should ensure that there is supervision of staff practice and that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home. In particular, include the regular use of evidence in safeguarding discussions, scenarios to refresh learning and the development of staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)

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: SC043994

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: MacIntyre Care

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

Responsible individual: Maria Fiddimore

Registered manager: Jennifer Marshall

Inspectors

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

Pete Hylton, Regulatory Inspection Manager

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2021