

SC466378

Registered provider: Children Assisted in a Real Environment Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A limited company operates this children's home, providing care and accommodation for up to five children who have learning disabilities. The registered manager also manages another home provided by this company. Currently, two children live in the home long term and another four children stay at the home for short breaks.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 July 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: 13 October 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:

- Children receive good-quality care.
- Staff understand and meet children's needs well.
- Improvements in children's behaviour positively affects their home and school lives.
- Children experience warm, affectionate relationships with the staff.
- Staff prepare children well for any changes in their lives, reducing anxiety and incidents of challenging behaviour.
- Effective communication between staff, families, schools and social workers works in children's best interests.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/10/2016	Full	Good
02/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/11/2015	Full	Good
26/03/2015	Full	Adequate

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 independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))	31/08/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(e))	31/08/2017
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))	31/08/2017

Recommendations

- The children’s guide should help children to understand: what the day-to-day routines of the home are (‘what happens in the home’); the statement of purpose of the home (the care they can expect to receive while living there). Specifically, including the positive behaviour techniques used by staff. (‘Guide to the children’s home regulations including the quality standards’, page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- Ensure that, for children’s homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children’s homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene, etc.). However, in doing so, homes

should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. Specifically, make arrangements: to maintain the front and rear gardens, including removal of cigarette butts, weeds and nettles and cutting the grass in the rear garden; redecorate a child's bedroom where there are bare patches on the wall; and review how latex gloves are stored in bathrooms as these are accessible to children and could be a potential choking risk. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- Ensure that the registered person checks that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. Specifically, the registered manager should sign behaviour management plans and risk assessments to evidence their scrutiny of these documents and sign off incident reports involving restraint as soon as possible. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress. Parents and social workers are particularly pleased that children's progress in the home leads to improved outcomes at school and with their families, particularly in reducing challenging behaviour. Children are better able to regulate their own behaviour, which helps them feel more in control. A social worker finds 'so much progress with behaviour and personal care'.

A children's guide gives children an idea of what to expect in the home. However, there is currently only one version that does not differentiate between those children who live in the home and those who visit for short breaks. Also, a section on behaviour management does not reflect how staff manage behaviour positively in the home.

Children enjoy their time in the home. They experience new things and go out on activities. Children enjoy their time indoors. For example, using the sensory room, baking or taking part in the Friday night disco. Parents appreciate that some children now have reduced reliance on computer tablets for entertainment. Staff are considering providing those who live long term in the home with the experience of a holiday.

Relationships with family members improve. A social worker reports a 'huge transformation' in a child, which results in more quality time spent with their family. Staff advocate for children where changes in arrangements to meet their families are not in their best interests.

Meals are family occasions which staff and children enjoy together. As with all activities, staff expect all children to help, for example, by laying the table, taking dirty dishes to the kitchen and washing up. As a result, children enjoy these routines and develop skills which help them become more independent. Some children are now more willing to try new foods, or foods from other cultures as a result of staff encouragement.

Children's communication skills develop. For example, some children are able to form

longer sentences when speaking, while others are able to listen better and respond to instructions. Children use pictures and communication systems to express their preferences, regarding activities and choice of menus, as well as to express how they are feeling.

Parents say that their children get excited about attending the home. One said, 'He always wants to come.' Staff celebrate special occasions with the children such as birthdays. Staff take children to places of worship if they wish to participate in their religion.

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

Safety is good. Parents trust the staff to keep their children safe and they do. Staff develop their skills in safeguarding through training. Social workers and parents are confident about children's safety both in the home and out in the community. A parent said, 'I don't know what they do, but they do it well. I've no worries about his safety.' Staff understand children's vulnerability due to their disabilities and supervise them effectively. No children have gone missing from the home or when out on trips.

Incidents involving use of restraint are low. The registered manager does monitor these incidents, but in one case did not sign off an incident report in a timely manner and did not notify Ofsted of the incident. In a few cases, some details required by regulation are not included in records of restraint.

Staff recruitment is thorough. Good checks are made of potential employees before they start to work in the home. There has been some change of staff; however, a core team, supported by regularly used agency staff, provide children with stability.

Behaviour management is positive and effective. Staff follow children's plans, helping them work towards achieving their targets. Their use of methods, such as social stories and 'countdowns' of days to different events, helps prepare children and reduce any distress about transitions. Behaviour management is reliant on staff's good understanding of children and what may trigger heightened behaviour. A social worker said staff are 'so attuned to children's needs'.

Staff help children feel safe in their routines, for example, having a quiet time before bed in order to be calm. A social worker praised the staff for their consistent approach in giving a child the same message to help them feel secure. Staff encourage good manners and give children praise to reinforce acceptable behaviour.

Staff communicate effectively with families and professionals. This ensures that all are aware of any changes in children's well-being or behaviour. A parent said, 'Staff are prompt and helpful. It's very safe.'

Arrangements to give medication are safe. Staff are diligent in administering and recording medication. They encourage children to participate in taking their own medication wherever possible.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Staff regard the management structure as 'really good'. They find that the registered manager and her deputy listen to their ideas and are approachable. The staff and managers bring varied skills, experience and training to their role. They show passion and commitment to the children's care and want them to have a positive experience in the home. A social worker describes 'an amazing team who work very well together'. A member of staff said that they like 'working with the children, giving them support and bringing out their abilities'.

Arrangements to maintain some aspects of the building require some improvement. The front and rear gardens are not well maintained and one child's bedroom requires redecoration. Latex gloves are stored in bathrooms and potentially accessible to children. However, the registered manager does not believe that this presents a risk to those currently using the service.

Staff receive regular training, with the majority achieving the minimum level 3 qualification. A member of staff said, 'Training and support are good.' Supervision, appraisal and team meetings help support staff in their work with each child.

Monitoring is effective. The deputy reviews the service every six months to reflect on and improve what has happened. An independent person visits regularly to check what goes on. Their reports are thorough, making useful recommendations which have helped the service to develop, particularly regarding behaviour management. However, the reports do not specify the independent person's opinion as to whether the staff safeguard children and promote their well-being.

Parents and social workers like the building as it is like a family home, although with the adaptations children need. The home is cosy with a calm and relaxed atmosphere. Children move about freely, using the sensory room or their bedrooms if they want some time alone. In terms of checks of systems such as fire, gas and electrical appliances, the safety of the building is good.

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 difference 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 who 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: SC466378

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Children Assisted in a Real Environment Ltd

Registered provider address: 144 Old Oak Road, London W3 7HF

Responsible individual: Linda Blakely

Registered manager: Natasha Robinson

Inspector

Jacqueline Graves, social care regulatory inspector

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