

1244493

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to provide care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2022.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 2 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/11/2022	Full	Good
10/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
27/11/2019	Full	Good
31/07/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make positive progress from their individual starting points. Staff ensure that children benefit from well-planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively. A parent said, 'I cannot fault the staff. They are amazing. It's like he has another little family.'

Staff ensure that children have access to the services they need to be healthy. Medical consent is obtained, which ensures that staff are familiar with the types of health decisions that are delegated to them. Staff advise children about key health issues to encourage them to lead a healthy lifestyle. A child said, 'I get on with staff, and staff help me with everything.'

Staff support children to spend time with their families. As a result, children sustain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them. The manager is a strong advocate of family time and has developed good relationships with children's families. A parent said, 'The manager is incredibly supportive.'

Staff work with the providers of children's education to promote children's regular school attendance and educational achievements. Overall, children make good progress in education, and staff support children when education becomes difficult. Most children attend school regularly. However, one child is home tutored on a part-time basis for only five hours a week. The manager is working to secure a full-time educational provision for them.

Staff help children to develop their independent living skills, such as shopping, cooking and budgeting. However, eligible care leavers do not have pathway plans to promote their readiness for independence and adulthood.

Staff provide children with effective, high-quality support that helps children make improvements in most areas of their lives. A parent said, 'It is one of the best homes he's been in. I have been very impressed with his carers.'

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

Staff prioritise children's safety effectively and have a good understanding of their specific needs and vulnerabilities. The use of risk management plans and effective safe working practices reduces risk and protects children from harm. Children become increasingly safer due to the actions staff take to protect and support them.

On occasions when children go missing from the home, staff actively look for them and work closely with partner agencies to secure children's well-being and safe return. Significant incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities to protect children and keep them safe from harm.

Allegations of abuse are managed effectively. The manager works closely with the local authority designated officers to address any safeguarding concerns in a timely and effective manner.

Staff consistently have high expectations of behaviour and implement clear rules and boundaries to promote a safe environment for children. Staff understand the triggers for children's behaviour and are quick to respond to incidents to prevent behaviours from escalating. Restraint is only ever used as a last resort and to protect children from harm.

Children know how to make a complaint and their rights are promoted effectively. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Staff are recruited and vetted carefully to protect children from unsuitable people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager ensures that children benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively in children's best interests. The manager is supported by a newly appointed deputy manager and an experienced responsible individual.

There have been some staff changes since the last inspection. The manager is in the process of recruiting to two current vacant positions. Existing staff cover any shortfalls in the rota to negate the use of agency staff. As a result, children receive consistent care.

The manager speaks positively about the staff team and feels that staff are developing and moving in the right direction. The addition of a new deputy manager has been helpful and beneficial for the manager in delegating tasks and ensuring the smooth day-to-day operation of the home.

Staff benefit from regular team meetings, good-quality training and practice-related supervision. This ensures that staff are supported in promoting and meeting children's specific needs safely and effectively.

Staff meet the aims and objectives of the home, as set out in the statement of purpose, and deliver good-quality care to children.

Health and safety matters are addressed effectively. The home has recently been redecorated and provides children with a physically safe, homely and comfortable living environment. However, the kitchen door has a lock that is not used but looks institutional. Additionally, a garden gate is broken and has not yet been replaced.

The manager makes good use of the internal and external monitoring activities to secure continuing improvement. They have met and addressed all the requirements and recommendations raised at the last 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, 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
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the door lock to the kitchen is removed.	30 March 2024
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that pathway plans for eligible care leavers are obtained.	30 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff consistently pursue full-time educational attendance for children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- The registered person should ensure that the damaged rear garden gate is replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1244493

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 34 Church Street, Hyde SK14 1JJ

Responsible individual: Douglas Loney

Registered manager: Dil Khan

Inspector

Anthony Kyem, Social Care Inspector

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