

1254837

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to 6 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 6 children were living at the home. The inspector spoke with 4 children during the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2019.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection, and care.

Date of last inspection: 10 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2024	Full	Good
09/08/2023	Full	Good
24/01/2023	Full	Good
08/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children gain lifelong connections living in the home. They have positive relationships with staff that have provided children with a place that they call 'their home.' Children are making significant progress and spend time doing things that they enjoy. Many children are engaging more in education, expressing their emotions in a safe way and are safer because of the relationships that they have with staff. One child said that for the first time, they feel like they live a 'normal childhood' living in this home. Children succeed because of the trust that they have in staff and their secure, positive relationships.

Children experience meaningful planned moves out of the home. Staff focus on ensuring that children have the knowledge and skills to succeed in the next chapter of their life. Staff celebrate children and assure them that they will always be a part of the home. Many young people who have moved on still visit the home. They regularly contact staff to keep in touch and ask for help with the daily tasks of life, like that of a child contacting their family. When talking about staff, 1 child who has moved on from the home said that they call specific staff members 'mam' and 'nana.' Another young person said that they would move back into the home tomorrow if they could.

Education has been a challenge within the home. One member of staff has taken the lead regarding education to provide continuity and oversight of all children's educational journeys. Staff provide challenge to ensure that professionals are actively seeking and developing educational opportunities for children. Staff also proactively seek other educational opportunities that they can provide children who are not engaging in their formal education placement. They arrange visits to educational places like Penshaw monument and museums. Three children have recently achieved their Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. Staff provide incentives to children for their engagement in education. As a result, children's education attendance has significantly increased. One professional said that a child has flourished in their education because of the rewards staff have implemented.

Children have the freedom to choose how they spend their free time. Staff provide a wide range of activities that children can enjoy. Memories of these experiences are captured in photos alongside typical life experiences such as going to the dentist, attending hospital, and learning to be more independent. All experiences are shared with children in a memory book, which demonstrates the progress that they have made as part of their life story work.

Staff provide support for children and their families to promote healthy relationships. Staff work closely with parents and professionals to develop positive working relationships. Staff have gone above and beyond in helping one professional develop a more positive relationship with a child's parent. Strengthening this relationship has resulted in the child being able to spend time with their family and stay overnight. Staff

complete in depth work with children to support them to understand their own emotions and express these safely. One child's significant progress in safe emotional expression has resulted in them having positive experiences with their younger siblings on a regular basis.

The home environment is like a family home. Children choose how to decorate their own bedrooms, and their personalities shine through the decor. A new beauty room has been fully decorated and furnished with hair stations and a nail bar. Children enjoy using this space which encourages them to spend time together and with staff.

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

The positive relationships staff have with children enable them to have regular conversations about risk, educating children about their own risks, supporting them to develop strategies and keep themselves safe. Staff use playfulness and empathy to encourage children to engage with these. Staff demonstrate professional curiosity, identifying and exploring any emerging risks to children.

Children's risk assessments are detailed and identify how children may behave when they are at risk. They provide clear guidance to staff on the strategies needed to help keep children safe and to mitigate the risks. Children are rarely held when living at the home. There is focus on staff using their positive relationships and deescalation strategies to help children feel calmer when they are upset. When children are held, it is a last resort and only when children or staff are at risk of harm.

Allegations are taken seriously. Children are listened to and allegations are investigated. When children no longer want to pursue an allegation, managers continue with the investigation process to assure themselves that children are safe.

Missing incidents have significantly reduced. In the past year, 1 child has experienced a significant reduction in missing incidents. Incidents that have occurred have only been for short periods of time rather than multiple days. When children do go missing, staff continuously make efforts to locate them safely by searching for them, contacting them and those known to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is an inspirational leader who provides children with positive experiences through safe and trusted relationships with adults. Children's individual care needs are their focus, and they are committed to providing care that enables children to flourish and exceed their own expectations. The registered manager is supported by a deputy manager who shares the same tenacity and commitment.

The registered manager's strong focus on relationship building has provided the home with excellent connections with professionals. Staff have continuous communication with professionals and actively seek their expertise in supporting children and keeping them safe. Staff provide necessary challenge while maintaining strong professional links. One

professional said that a strength of staff is how they advocate for children. Another said that staff will do all that they can to secure positive outcomes for children.

Staff say that they receive the best support they have experienced working in this home, with leaders demonstrating genuine consideration for their wellbeing. They speak highly of the management team. Staff retention is high, demonstrating stability and providing consistency for children. Multiple staff have provided examples of where the support that they have experienced has been vital to their confidence in their role, personal life, and health needs.

Managers provide creative ways to bring the team together, strengthening their relationships and encouraging staff to be proud to work in the home. This has created a positive working atmosphere, where staff are in tune with each other, and provide high quality, consistent care to children.

All staff demonstrate the necessary training and understanding of children to meet their needs. When managers identify gaps in staff's knowledge and skills, they source specialist and individualised training relating to the specific needs of children living in the home. This has developed staff's understanding of children as individuals. It has also developed staff's skills to consistently provide high quality care. The registered manager is active in their encouragement for staff to access development opportunities. They recognise individual staff's strengths and encourage them to go out of their comfort zones, developing their practice and securing positive outcomes for children.

No requirements or recommendations were raised during this inspection.

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: 1254837

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sunderland City Council

Registered provider address: City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA

Responsible individual: Sharon Willis

Registered manager: Barry Hall

Inspector

Sarah McGow, Social Care Inspector

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