

1259118

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority and provides care for up to 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2018 and is suitably qualified.

One child was living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 December 2025

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: 10 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2024	Full	Good
22/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, only one child has lived at the home. During the inspection, this child spoke with the inspector.

Before moving into the home, the child was given opportunities to meet staff and visit the setting. This helped them to become familiar with the environment and the adults who would be supporting them. This child-centred approach reflects careful planning and demonstrates that the child's needs are prioritised. It also shows that the child feels involved in and listened to regarding decisions about their care.

The child is making good progress from their starting points. Staff consistently encourage and support the child to attend school and achieve well. When the child experiences difficulties with school attendance, staff work closely with education professionals to identify and remove any barriers. This collaborative approach ensures that the child's learning and development remain a priority.

The child's health and wellbeing are a clear priority for staff. They ensure that the child attends all routine and specialist appointments, supporting their physical and emotional health. Staff benefit from regular input from an external therapeutic service, which provides guidance and reflective practice sessions. This enables managers and staff to consider the child's individual needs and deliver consistent, therapeutic care that supports their overall wellbeing.

There is a stable and familiar team of staff that is clearly committed to the child's care and wellbeing. They have developed close, warm relationships that help the child feel safe and valued. This stability enables the child to build strong, positive connections with the adults caring for them. These trusting relationships create a nurturing atmosphere in the home, supporting the child to feel secure and confident.

Staff actively encourage positive friendships and social opportunities. The child's friends are welcomed into the home, which supports the development of their social life and sense of belonging. Staff also encourage the child to build friendships in the local community and take part in shared social activities. These experiences are carefully and safely managed, helping the child to widen their social circle and grow in confidence when engaging in new social environments.

Staff are dedicated to supporting the child in maintaining meaningful relationships with those who are important to them. Family visits are prioritised, and both the manager and staff advocate for increased time where this is appropriate and in the child's best interests. This approach helps the child to remain close to those who matter most and feel connected to significant people in their life.

The home provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere, helping the child to feel comfortable and settled. Photos of the child and significant adults are displayed, creating a strong sense of belonging and acceptance. The living room includes toys and items that reflect the child's interests, encouraging engagement in activities and positive interactions with staff. The child's bedroom is personalised to reflect their personality and preferences, further enhancing their sense of ownership and comfort in the home. While the overall environment is homely, some minor improvements to cleanliness and decor are required to maintain the high standards expected of a comfortable and well-presented home.

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

Staff respond in a calm and therapeutic manner to incidents of behaviour that is difficult to manage, helping the child to de-escalate safely. This demonstrates a child-focused approach that prioritises emotional regulation and wellbeing. After incidents, staff hold reflective discussions with the child to support them in processing their feelings and understanding their emotions. These conversations help the child to identify potential triggers and develop strategies to manage their responses more effectively.

Risks and care plans are regularly reviewed and monitored by managers to ensure that they remain effective and appropriate. When necessary, the manager makes timely referrals to specialist agencies so that additional services and support can be provided. This careful oversight helps to manage risk proportionately while supporting the child's safety. It also ensures a balanced approach that supports age-appropriate independence alongside safeguarding their wellbeing.

Staff follow established safety plans and protocols without delay when the child goes missing from home. They proactively search known locations in the local community and contact friends and family in their efforts to locate and safeguard the child. These actions demonstrate a strong commitment to the child's welfare and safety. Missing-from-home incidents have recently reduced significantly, which is attributed to the updated safety plan now in place and the home's commitment to listening to the child's views and involving them in their care planning.

Staff respond effectively when the child struggles to manage their emotions and becomes upset. They quickly identify potential triggers and apply agreed de-escalation strategies to calm and support the child. This consistent, therapeutic approach ensures that the child receives nurturing care tailored to their individual needs and encourages emotional stability and resilience.

Managers respond effectively when concerns are raised by the child and, when appropriate, make the necessary referrals to the appropriate professionals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and demonstrates a strong commitment to providing therapeutic, child-centred care. She conveys passion for her role and values her team highly. Staff speak positively about her leadership and feel well supported and respected in their work. Together, the manager and staff form an effective, cohesive team focused on meeting the child's needs and promoting positive outcomes. One member of staff said, 'I love working here, I love my job and it's a great team.'

The manager is well supported by her assistant manager, who shares her vision and commitment to creating a child-centred home. The manager is ambitious for her assistant's professional development and takes pride in her achievements. She has actively supported her learning and growth, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in the team.

Staff are supported through regular, reflective supervision and team meetings, which promote professional development and consistency in practice. Staffing in the home is stable, providing continuity of care for the child. When new staff are recruited, they complete a thorough induction programme that includes training and guidance to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to provide high-quality, child-centred care.

External professionals report that communication with the home is effective and collaborative. Regular meetings and discussions take place to review the child's needs and care plan. This joined-up approach provides holistic oversight and ensures that the child benefits from consistent, well-coordinated support. It also fosters a positive environment focused on continuous improvement. One teaching professional said, 'The home is responsive to queries and works collaboratively to implement agreed strategies, ensuring continuity of care and support.'

External and internal monitoring processes are maintained by the manager to identify and implement improvements in the home. However, there are occasional delays in receiving reports from independent monitoring visits, which can hinder the manager's ability to respond promptly to recommendations. Despite this, the manager remains focused on continuous improvement and takes proactive steps to address any issues as soon as information becomes available.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has introduced a 'You Said, We Did' section in monthly meetings with the child to capture their wishes and feelings. However, there is currently no clear system for reviewing how these views are acted on or for evaluating the feedback provided to the child.

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 an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI; the placing authorities of children; the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and the responsible individual (if one is nominated). (Regulation 44 (1)(7)(a)(c)(d)(e)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the independent person visits the home and, if they consent, speaks to the children and their parents, and sends all reports to HMCI in the required timeframes.	21 January 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with a nurturing and supportive environment that meets their needs, ensuring that the home is clean and well presented. This is specifically with regards to the deep cleaning of the home and required maintenance of the building. ('Guide to the Children's Homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care and their individual wishes and feelings explored. This is to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to receive feedback from staff to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. ('Guide to the Children's Home regulations, including the quality standards', Page 22, paragraph, 4.11)

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: 1259118

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Floor 2, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 1HH

Responsible individual: Tracey Dawson

Registered manager: Stacey Hegarty

Inspector

Gill Rudkin, Social Care Inspector

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