

2525774

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Childrens Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2020.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 16 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2022	Full	Good
24/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from well-tailored plans that meet their needs effectively. Children make significant progress because of the effective, high-quality support provided to them by dedicated and committed staff. They benefit from excellent relationships with the adults that support them and provide consistency and stability in their lives.

Staff are positive role models for the children. As a result, children benefit from adults that they can talk to and learn from. A child said, 'It's a great staff team and one of the best care homes I've been in. We are treated nice and always have someone to speak to.'

Staff aspire to make a positive difference to the lives of children and contribute to considerable change and improvement in their lives. Children make significant progress across aspects of their welfare and physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. A social worker said, 'It's a fantastic home. To be honest, it's the best home I have worked with.'

The health needs of children are reliably met. Children have access to the health services they need to stay healthy, and there are good arrangements made to promote the children's good health. Medical consent is obtained, and staff are clear about the types of health decisions and responsibilities that are delegated to them.

Children who have previously suffered from a history of school non-attendance or lengthy periods of disrupted education are now attending school with good levels of attendance. However, one child is currently on a reduced school timetable to support their educational needs and learning. A teacher reported, '[Name of the child] is now fully participating in his education, and that's a huge achievement.' A social worker said, '[Name of the child] has done exceptionally well, especially in terms of his education. Really proud of what he has achieved.'

Staff support children to spend time with their friends and families. Consequently, children sustain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them.

Staff provide children with positive activities. As a result, children develop social skills and show improved self-confidence. Children have enjoyed going to the cinema, playing football, cooking, bowling, go-karting, fishing and skydiving with staff.

The accommodation provided for children is maintained to a good standard. However, the home would benefit from some redecoration. For example, children's bedrooms are not furnished or decorated to a high standard, and they lack personalisation. There are locks to the kitchen and lounge areas, and although staff

say they are not used, they should be removed as they give an institutional feel to the home.

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

There are clear and effective risk management plans to address the specific needs and emerging vulnerabilities of children. These plans are regularly reviewed by staff and demonstrate a clear decline in risk-taking behaviour. The care and support provided by staff ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm.

Behaviour management practices are highly effective. Each child has a specific plan that identifies preventative strategies to reduce the risk of harm. Significant incidents are rare, and when they do occur, they are managed effectively by staff. One child said, 'I am proud of where I am at now. They got me away from bad influences and helped get me into education.'

Staff understand the children and the triggers for their behaviour. When it has been necessary to hold a child to keep them safe, staff use the least restrictive measure. Holds are recorded in detail, and these are evaluated by the registered manager. Staff are supported to reflect on incidents, which helps them to prevent incidents from reoccurring.

Effective communication is maintained with parents and professionals, which allows for a well-coordinated response for when children have gone missing from the home. On the one occasion when a child's whereabouts were unknown, staff responded proactively in line with the home's protocols and procedures. This ensured that the child was located quickly and returned safely by staff.

Children benefit from positive and supportive relationships with staff. Children maintain regular contact with staff when they are out of the home on free time. As a result, the risk of children going missing from home is reduced.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection. The home continues to meet the aims and objectives as set out in its statement of purpose, and it secures positive outcomes for the children. One child said, 'I'd say [Name of the home] is outstanding, because it's been outstanding to me.'

Children benefit from living in a home that is managed efficiently and effectively. The registered manager is an inspirational leader who leads staff by example and provides them with a clear sense of purpose and direction.

The manager stimulates staff's enthusiasm. He provides excellent support for children and champions their needs effectively. One social worker said, 'The manager is an exceptional advocate for the children.'

The manager and staff are very passionate about the children they look after. They invest in their relationships with children and establish highly effective partnerships with their social workers, schools and parents to ensure that they benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. One parent said, 'I have seen a massive improvement, and staff are brilliant with him. They take pride in the kids and always give 100%.'

Staff training and developmental needs are met effectively. Staff benefit from regular practice-related supervision and receive good-quality training that is relevant to their roles and enables them to meet the specific needs of the children effectively.

Staff develop high-quality, trusting relationships with children, which is a real strength and positive feature of the home. This has enabled staff to reach out to hard-to-reach children and provide them with the love and support they need to form trusting relationships and positive attachments.

The conduct of the home is scrutinised effectively, and the registered manager has an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Leaders and managers tackle the identified weaknesses and use the home's monitoring activities to secure the home's continuing improvement.

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 registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; 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; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This relates specifically to children having unrestricted access to all communal areas and removing the locks to the kitchen and lounge areas.	24 April 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	25 August 2023

ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—

meet the needs of each child; and

enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.
(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))

This particularly refers to the redecoration and improved furnishing of children's bedrooms.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children have access to full-time education while they are of compulsory school age. The home must aim to support full-time attendance at school unless the child's relevant plan indicates that this is not in their best interests. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)

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: 2525774

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Childrens Homes Limited

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

Responsible individual: Nicola Brown

Registered manager: Douglas Loney

Inspectors

Anthony Kyem, Social Care Inspector
Kayleigh Treanor, Social Care Inspector

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