

2525774

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 owned by a private company. The home provides care for up to four children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2020.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 March 2022

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 **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: 24 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children's individual needs are at the centre of this home. Children's wishes, feelings and previous life experiences are all considered when planning and giving care. As a result, children enjoy living at the home and are making very good progress.

There are positive relationships between children and staff, based on mutual respect. Staff know the children well and adapt their practice to help children in a way that works for each child. One parent said, 'What I love about the home is the staff don't see it as a job, they see it as family. It is all about what is right for [name of child].'

Children are involved in how the home runs and decisions about their life. One child said, 'Staff have helped me to make the changes in my life.' Managers and staff involve children in all aspects of daily life in the home. This ensures that children feel listened to and included in things that affect them.

Staff help children to lead a healthy lifestyle. This is evident in the activities they take part in, the food they eat and the use of local health services. Family members were very positive about the home and the changes they had seen in their children. They say this is owing to the work of the staff at the home.

Children have made great progress in their education. Staff are ambitious for each child. Achievements are praised and celebrated. Therefore, children see the importance of education and how this can help them throughout their life.

Staff work alongside children's families wherever possible. Children are helped to spend time with their family and friends. A social worker for two of the children who live at the home said they had never known a home that worked so well with families.

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

Children said they feel safe in the home. They all said they had staff they could talk to if they had any concerns. They feel that staff listen to them and take any concerns seriously.

Significant incidents are rare. When they do occur, staff manage them well. Records are clear and detailed. There is reflection and learning after all incidents. This helps to inform future ways of working and reduces the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Assessments of risks are clear and are reviewed regularly. Staff understand specific risks that individual children have been exposed to. Children are supported to take age-appropriate risks as they work towards independence. One social worker said,

'The level of interpretation of risk is very good.' As a result, children are protected and helped to keep themselves safe.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When they do, staff make every effort to contact them, find them and involve other agencies where necessary. An independent return home interview always takes place. Staff also discuss the risks associated with being missing from home with the children.

Restraint is a last resort after all attempts of de-escalation have been explored. When it is necessary to hold a child, it is recorded in detail. Work with the child afterwards has been effective. This has meant that restraint is seldom used.

Recruitment processes are thorough. Casual staff receive the same induction and training as permanent staff. This helps to keep children safe by ensuring suitable, well-trained people work with children in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is extremely ambitious for all the children in the home. He is reflective, realistic and positive. This has led to staff feeling that they learn from him in all areas of caring for the children.

The managers and leaders have made changes which have significantly improved the experience for children and staff. Staff have been developed as individuals and as a team. The changes to the culture within the team have helped staff improve the lives and progress of the children.

Managers and leaders give and receive regular and effective supervision. The manager appreciates the support he gets from senior managers. This is then seen throughout the team. As a result, all members of staff report that they are fully supported and are learning and developing under the manager's leadership.

Managers ensure that training and development of staff is a priority. There is a comprehensive programme of training. Therefore, the team are equipped to work more effectively and safely with children.

Managers are always approachable and available for support. They lead by example and listen to children and staff. All the children say that they would go to the manager for anything.

The manager is proud of the team and the difference they are making to children's lives, development and future opportunities. He is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses and has created a culture where children can thrive, progress and achieve.

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 Children's Homes Limited

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

Responsible individual: Nicola Brown

Registered manager: Douglas Loney

Inspector

Shaun Caplis, Social Care Inspector

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