

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.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2024.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 November 2024

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: 6 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2024	Full	Good
01/02/2023	Full	Good
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 make significant progress in relation to their starting points and benefit from consistency and stability in their lives. Staff provide children with a supportive, safe, caring and nurturing environment. A social worker said, 'I have been impressed by the provisions overall culture and approach.' A child said, 'All staff are amazing.'

Children benefit from well-tailored plans that staff use to promote their needs effectively. The care provided by dedicated and experienced staff, leads to improvement in the lives of children.

Staff's relationships with children are built on trust and mutual respect. There is strong evidence to show that the care that children receive is helping them to sustain improvement. A child that lived at the home previously, told the inspector, 'Staff helped me so much to make a better life for myself. It was brilliant living here and I miss it.' Staff maintain effective partnerships with social workers and other partner agencies to provide the best possible help and all-round support for children.

Staff promote family time and are strong advocates for children. They ensure that children maintain their close relationships with the people who matter most to them. Staff provide children with positive activities and promote their interests and hobbies.

Children's health needs are met effectively by staff. Staff ensure that children have access to the services that they need to be healthy. They store and administer children's medication safely and are familiar with the health decisions that are delegated to them.

Staff promote education and encourage children's regular school attendance. They work proactively with the providers of children's education to promote positive outcomes for children. A social worker said, '[the child's name] has started at a new school and staff have been very supportive.' The home's newest child requires a revised education plan, which the manager has requested from the placing authority.

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

Children benefit from effective support, help and protection. Robust risk management plans are understood and followed by staff to protect children and minimise their risk of harm. Staff have a good awareness of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children and understand the triggers for each child's behaviour. Staff are trained and skilled in managing behaviours that challenge. The use of restraint is only ever used when it is absolutely necessary, to protect children from harm.

Staff help children to explore their feelings and emotions that underpin their behaviour. They take action to prevent unwanted behaviours from escalating. They help and support children to manage their feelings and behaviours safely. A social worker said,

'[The name of the child] speaks about the staff in a positive way. Staff have a good understanding of his needs and clearly care a lot for him.'

The use of consequences to manage negative behaviours are fair, balanced and proportionate. Staff help children to reflect on their behaviour and to take responsibility for their actions. Rewards are used to praise and reinforce positive behaviour.

When a child has gone missing from the home, staff actively look for them and work closely with the police to secure their safe return. The frequency of missing from home incidents has reduced significantly in relation to children's starting points.

Significant incidents are reported to the appropriate agencies to ensure that children are protected from harm. Staff form highly effective partnerships with the police, social workers and other safeguarding agencies to promote the safety of children.

The accommodation provided for children is comfortable, but areas of the home require minor refurbishment and redecoration. The home's washing facilities, for example, are looking tired, worn and dated. Health and safety matters are managed effectively ensuring that children live in a safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

An experienced, dedicated and enthusiastic registered manager provides strong and effective leadership of the daily operations of the home. They ensure that high standards and good quality care are consistently maintained for children. The manager and the responsible individual are strong and visible presences in the lives of children. They ensure that the care provided promotes the positive progress and experiences of children.

Leaders and managers are loyal and strong advocates for children. They champion the needs of children effectively. They have high expectations of staff and consistently high aspirations for children. Staff care for children and don't give up on them easily.

Staff are well-trained, supported and managed. They share a positive team spirit and strive to have a positive impact and make a meaningful difference in the lives of children. The manager stimulates staff's efforts and leads them by example. A staff member said, 'The atmosphere is filled with energy and hope. As a staff team, we work together to create a safe and nurturing space where our young people can thrive.'

Staff have access to regular, high-quality training to enable them to meet the specific needs of children effectively. Staff attend meetings that are child focussed and benefit from regular, practice-related supervision. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their work and consistently consider the outcomes and experiences of children.

Children benefit from having a stable, diverse and committed staff team with staff employed from different backgrounds, gender groups, and ethnicities with diverse skill

sets and life experiences. As a result, children learn to embrace diversity and benefit from high-quality relationships with diverse staff.

Leaders and managers form highly effective, high-quality partnerships with all partner agencies. This ensures that children's needs are met comprehensively, and they benefit from the best possible support through effective multi-agency working.

The manager makes excellent use of monitoring systems to review the progress and experiences of children. They have a strong and comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and take action to secure continuing improvement. The views of children, staff and stakeholders are used effectively to evaluate and improve the care and support provided for children.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that an updated care plan is obtained from the placing authority and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.2).
- The registered person should ensure that the home is redecorated and that a programme for refurbishment is implemented to improve the accommodation provided for children. ('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: 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: Douglas Loney

Registered manager: Samantha Lewis

Inspector

Anthony Kyem, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024