

2538287

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by the local authority. It provides care for up to two children who have experienced early childhood instability that has led to trauma and/or associated complex behaviours.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2020 and holds a leadership and management qualification at level 5.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

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	outstanding
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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: 19 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/10/2021	Full	Good
12/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

There were no children living at the home at the time of this inspection. Since the last inspection, one child has lived at the home. During their time in the home, staff's care and support contributed to this child thriving and excelling. Staff went on to provide exceptional support to the child as they transitioned back to their father's care in June 2022. This child's father told the inspector, 'The support from the staff has been positive from the start, they could not have done anything better.'

Children's admissions to the home are exceptionally well planned and considered. During the inspection, another child was visiting the home as part of her admission planning. Staff recognise that it is important that children can spend time at the home to get to know staff and help to get their bedroom ready for when they move in. The staff team works closely with all the professionals to ensure that children's transitions into the home are successful.

Staff have high aspirations for children and provide attuned, thoughtful care to help them to achieve their potential. They are extremely committed and work creatively to help children to progress. For example, staff's persistent support helped one child back into full-time education after an extended period out of school. This child now has excellent attendance and is once again enjoying going to school.

Staff promote children's health and well-being. Staff promote healthy eating and activities to assist children's physical and mental health. In addition, staff understand the importance of children's emotional well-being. They are adept at identifying when children need additional support. For example, staff supported one child to attend grief counselling to help him to process his loss. As a result, the child started to express his emotions in a safe way. Staff speak to children with sensitivity and compassion about their difficulties and behaviour. As a result, children's well-being improves.

Extremely positive and meaningful relationships are shared between the staff and children. Children know that the staff genuinely care about them, which assists them to significantly improve their levels of self-esteem and self-worth and enables them to move forward with their lives. Staff make it clear to children that they will not give up on them. In addition, the high staff-to-child ratio means that staff are always available to offer additional support to children when required.

Managers have developed comprehensive plans for children which focus on their needs. The managers speak of children with warmth and in a positive manner. They want the best for children and are driven to support them to achieve positive outcomes. This caring and motivated approach is also present in the team of staff. As a result, children are placed at the centre of what they do.

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

Children are safe and feel safe in the home. Staff apply consistently clear routines and boundaries. This means that children understand what is expected of them. The staff team works closely with other key professionals, including social workers and therapists, to ensure that approaches to manage children's difficulties are fully considered and well thought out. One professional told the inspector, 'The staff team always puts the needs of the child first and foremost; the staff think of every eventuality and are restorative in their approach.'

Staff ensure that they keep high-quality risk assessments up to date so that they can keep children safe. These detailed records reflect changes in the child's behaviour and vulnerabilities. Staff use these records daily to ensure that they maintain an in-depth understanding of children's individual needs. This approach has reduced risks to children and enabled children to become safer.

Children do not go missing from the home. The positive relationships that staff have with children mean that they recognise and respond quickly to changes in behaviours. In addition, as children form trusting relationships with staff, the need for physical intervention reduces.

All staff have an excellent understanding of the issues that children face. On the rare occasion there is a safeguarding concern, staff respond swiftly to ensure that children are kept safe. On one occasion, there was a delay in notifying Ofsted of an incident; however, this had no impact as other professionals were involved and the child was appropriately safeguarded.

Staff recognise and celebrate with children their achievements no matter how small. When there has been a need to record a sanction for negative or undesirable behaviour, managers have not always reviewed the effectiveness of sanctions in detail. However, the sanctions are appropriate, and this shortfall has not compromised the safety of children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been in post since May 2020. He is suitably qualified and experienced and is well respected by staff and children. The registered manager and the assistant manager provide excellent leadership. They scrutinise all aspects of the service to ensure that it continues to meet the children's needs and helps them to reach their potential.

The registered manager is highly motivated and respected by the staff and other professionals. He has high expectations for the quality of care provided to children by the dedicated staff team. As a result, children achieve excellent outcomes.

The registered manager supports others to develop their own practice and skills. Staff advised the inspector that the managers are incredibly supportive. They receive regular supervision and attend team meetings that support and develop the staff team. This ensures that the managers and staff team understand each other's strengths and areas for development. As a result, staff are exceptionally well supported and supportive of each other.

There are clear and effective systems in place to monitor the home. As a result, where practice falls short of expectations, managers address the issues quickly and rectify them. This means that everyone understands their role and meets the manager's expectations.

The registered manager and staff team have developed strong relationships with all relevant professionals, including school staff and social workers. The monthly clinical support sessions help staff to develop their understanding of children's behaviours and presenting difficulties. As a result, there is excellent communication between professionals, and the strategies put in place to support children are informed and effective. Professionals are complimentary about the way staff work with children and the significant difference that they make to children's lives.

Staff have received a comprehensive range of training opportunities. As a result, they have the skills and knowledge for their roles. Most members of staff are suitably qualified and have a diploma in residential childcare at level 3. One member of staff has not obtained this award within the required time frame. However, this has not had an impact on the exceptional care delivered to children.

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
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff have completed the relevant qualification in residential childcare. This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated.	30 September 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that Ofsted is notified of any incident they consider serious without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62 paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a robust review of the effectiveness of any sanction issued to children to address poor behaviour. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45 paragraph 9.38)

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: 2538287

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: City of Stoke-on-Trent, Swann House, Boothern Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4SY

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Christopher Whalley

Inspector

Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

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