

2565716

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to six children who may have social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The home cares for children who cannot live with their families or who need a short break to remain with their current carers. Children might stay for short or long periods. The home also offers outreach services to children who live with their families or in other placements.

The suitably qualified and experienced manager registered with Ofsted in September 2020.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

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: 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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children value their time living in the home. Staff make significant efforts to get to know children from the outset. Children respond well and form good relationships with staff. The quality of these relationships is a strength of the home and children quickly begin to trust staff to help them. Consequently, most children make steady progress from their starting points.

Staff provide individualised care for children. Plans to support children's progress consistently include their views. Staff talk to children about the things that matter to them most. This includes education, family relationships, health, and plans for their futures. These discussions help children to understand that staff care deeply about them and want them to succeed. This helps children to respond to staff input and work towards achieving their goals.

Children's educational development is mixed. Staff talk to children who are anxious about a return to the classroom. This helps them to develop confidence in their own abilities. Some children make remarkable progress and return to education after years of provision that did not meet their needs. However, many children do not receive the education to which they are entitled. There are local sufficiency issues that limit the choice of schools. Some alternatives, such as tutors, do not have the skills to meet children's needs. This means that many children do not have any regular education. This not only affects their learning and options for the future, it also reduces the structure of their days.

Children's health is well supported. Staff support and encourage children who worry about attending routine medical appointments. Consequently, some children have these important health checks for the first time for a number of years. Staff talk to children about the importance of not smoking cigarettes and vapes. A consistent approach by staff means that children's use of cigarettes reduces. As well as ensuring that children's immediate health needs are met, staff are helping them to develop good habits for the future.

Children's emotional needs are a priority for staff. They understand the impact of trauma, and this underpins how staff respond to children. Creative work takes place with children to help them to understand how their experiences influence their world. Children also have good access to mental health specialists, who visit children in the home. This means that children receive expert help when they need it, as well as individualised care from staff. As a result, some children develop remarkable levels of insight and make clear progress.

Children take part in their own care planning. This helps children to understand the purpose of living in the home. For example, staff help children who are moving to their long-term home to get to know their new carers. Children who are moving to their own accommodation practise the skills that they need to succeed. This means

that, most of the time, children move from the home in a planned way that they expect and understand.

Children routinely provide their views about living in the home. This includes talking about activities or menus, as well as having conversations about their futures. Documents are written to children, which helps them to know that they are at the centre of staff thinking. This is the first time that some children have been properly involved in decision-making about their plans. This approach helps children to feel invested in the home and that their views matter.

Children live in a home that is well presented, warm and homely. Repairs to wear and tear are completed immediately. Adaptations are made to the home to reduce the likelihood of damage occurring. Site and housekeeping staff are held in very high regard by children and staff. They make a significant contribution to children's experiences of living in the home.

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

Over time, most children in the home become safer. Staff use their positive relationships to talk to children about issues such as going missing, substance misuse and exploitation. Staff search for children if they do not return home. This gives children a powerful message that staff care for them. As children become more invested in the home, they respond increasingly positively to staff support. As a result, some children's risks reduce significantly. For these children, living in this home has a remarkable effect on their outcomes.

Staff follow individualised risk assessments to reduce children's risk of harm. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. Specialist staff contribute to these assessments, which adds to their value. For example, if a child has a communication need, direction is given to staff about words to use or avoid. This enables the staff team to work together effectively to help children to become safer.

Staff help children to behave in socially acceptable ways. Approaches to the management of behaviour are innovative and there is a focus on restorative practice. Staff are generally consistent with this approach. Most of the time, children begin to respond to expectations. However, the behavioural difficulties of some children upset others, who worry about what might happen to them and to staff. Managers are aware of this and have plans to improve the experiences of these children. It is too soon to know whether these plans will be effective.

Staff undertake a wide array of safeguarding training. This gives them the knowledge that they need to identify risk and help children to become safer. For instance, staff have done significant learning about the impact of exploitation and caring for children with harmful sexual behaviour. Staff use such knowledge to provide effective care to children. Consequently, their risks reduce, leading to them and others becoming safer.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by an inspirational registered manager. He places children at the centre of everything in the home and expects the same from staff. The registered manager advocates on behalf of children and holds professionals to account. This means that children's needs are the priority for staff and others working with them. This helps children to make progress.

Leaders understand children's individual needs very well. They know the progress that children make, including their risks. Leaders use this knowledge to ensure that children who are coming to live in the home can be safely looked after alongside those already there. The registered manager will not admit more children to the home than can be safely cared for by staff. This means that staff can meet the individual needs of all children in the home.

Leaders have excellent relationships with members of the professional network. Leaders take part in organisation-wide groups that look at how best to understand and meet children's needs. This means that leaders influence wider practice in the best interests of children. Although difficulties are not instantly resolved, leaders are well placed to strive for an improved service for children.

Leaders have excellent oversight of what happens in the home. They review all records, including risk assessments and care plans. They carry out audits of staff discussions with children. This ensures that conversations are effective and support care planning for children. When leaders identify practice that needs to improve, this is made clear. As a result, staff know what to do to perform better. This leads to a forward-thinking staff team that is not afraid to examine lessons learned when mistakes are made.

Leaders ensure that staff get the support that they need. This includes effective training, supervision and induction into the home. Staff can talk to leaders about any concerns, including personal matters. Staff are proud to work in the home. They know that they make a difference to the lives of children who live there.

Leaders manage the recruitment of new staff effectively. They scrutinise difficulties with recruitment in the sector and make changes to improve the way that new staff apply for jobs. This is successful. As a result, the home has enough permanent staff to meet the needs of children. This helps to provide children with stability and continuity.

Leaders disseminate the learning that they have gained from how the home operates. This benefits other organisations, who value this input.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(xi)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that arrangements are made to reduce the potential for one child to hurt another, including when this involves children who do not live at the home.	31 May 2023
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i))	31 May 2023

In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff provide children with educational opportunities while suitable school placements are being identified.	
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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: 2565716

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Registered provider address: Middlesbrough House, 50 Corporation Road,
Middlesbrough TS1 2RH

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Robert Hamer

Inspector

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector

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