

2588593

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children who have social and emotional difficulties.

The children's home registered with Ofsted in May 2020. The manager was registered in February 2021.

There were two children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

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

Date of last inspection: 28 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The quality of care provided to children in this home is good. Children make good progress from their starting points. Staff place children at the centre of their practice and ensure that children's day-to-day needs are met.

Children are enabled to build positive relationships with staff. Staff show care, compassion and warmth towards children. This helps children to settle into their home and talk to staff about their worries. Children have a positive experience on arrival at the home to help them settle.

Staff work closely with children and their families to improve their relationships. Leaders and managers work closely with one child's placing authority to provide support for the child and parent to improve their relationship. As a result, the plan is now for the child to return to the care of their parent. This demonstrates that children are helped to rebuild important relationships.

Children's views are respected. Children's complaints are recorded and formally responded to by leaders and managers. Children are actively encouraged to take part in their own care planning. This supports them to develop a sense of ownership of their lives and helps them to make good progress.

The home's physical environment is safe for children. However, leaders and managers have failed to ensure that repair work in the children's bedrooms is carried out promptly. This does not provide a warm and comfortable environment for children.

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

Children's risks and vulnerabilities are well understood by staff. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep children safe.

Children's individual positive behaviour support plans are effective. Staff set consistent boundaries and routines for children. There is a clear reward system that promotes and encourages positive behaviour. This has reduced the number of incidents in the home.

Staff are proactive when children go missing from the home. They contact children and work with other agencies to ensure that children are safe. Records of missing-from-home incidents are thoroughly reviewed and debriefs are completed with staff and children. However, independent return home interviews are not always carried out. This is a missed opportunity to gather important information to manage and reduce risks.

Safeguarding practice is strong. Staff have a good understanding of whistle-blowing procedures. Leaders and managers take allegations of harm seriously and act promptly when issues arise. This increases children's safety.

Children are supported to understand the risks posed to them when accessing the internet. Staff use individual sessions with children to help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the risks. There are effective strategies and monitoring systems in place to address any concerns raised. As a result, children are kept safe when playing and working online.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led and managed by a committed and experienced registered manager. The manager and staff know the children well and hold high aspirations for them. Feedback from children, professionals and parents about the leaders, managers and staff is overwhelmingly positive.

Leaders and managers know the home's strengths and areas for development. There are effective monitoring systems in place to ensure that leaders and managers constantly review the quality of care provided to children. Children's records are comprehensive and reflect their everyday lives. However, children's care plans do not include their views, wishes and feelings to give the plans more meaning and help children to understand their care.

Leaders and managers are well informed and have a clear understanding of the progress that children make. They recognise when children are struggling and if the care provided is not meeting their needs. They work with the professional network to ensure that alternative plans are in place for children when necessary. This helps children get the right support to meet their needs and provides them with stability.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision. Supervision focuses on the children's needs, experiences and plans. Safeguarding issues are discussed, as well as staff development needs. This demonstrates effective management oversight of staff practice and development, and the progress that children are making.

Staff morale is very positive. Staff say that they feel well supported by leaders and managers. They are offered a range of face-to-face and online training. However, new staff have not completed all the mandatory training, including restraint training. As a result, not all staff are suitably trained to work with the children in their care.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff receive mandatory training to meet the needs of the children in their care and that required repair work in children's bedrooms is completed without delay.	30 January 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, for the home to be a nurturing and supportive environment, they continue to repair all areas of the home's interior, including the children's bedrooms. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Children's care plans records should be completed in a child-friendly style and reflect the creative attempts staff have taken to engage

children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing or away from home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The registered person should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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: 2588593

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care Limited

Registered provider address: Camomile House, 6 Embassy Drive, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1TP

Responsible individual: Stephen Travis

Registered manager: Alison Macaulay

Inspector

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector

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