

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 with social and emotional difficulties.

The home was registered with Ofsted in May 2020. The manager registered in January 2024.

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

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

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: 6 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2022	Full	Good
28/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by a consistent and committed team of staff. Staff take time to get to know children, earn their trust and listen to their views. Children talk to staff about their worries and concerns. The registered manager and her team have succeeded in creating a family feel to the home. Children feel valued and cared for.

Children spoke positively when describing their experience of living at the home. One child said, 'Staff are nice and supportive, quite chilled ... we are always going out on activities, and I can talk to anyone.'

The registered manager understands that moving home and starting a new school are difficult. Staff work with teachers and other professionals to address children's issues with attendance at school. Children are supported to reintegrate into formal education. Children's concerns around education are listened to, and the staff and children work together to make a plan. As a result, children make progress with their education.

Children are registered promptly with healthcare professionals and supported to attend their appointments. Staff work hard with children to establish a healthy routine.

Staff value children's input and involve them in activities and planning. Children engage in a wide range of activities in the home and in the community. Relaxing with face packs, having their nails painted and doing makeovers are current favourite activities. One child enjoys cooking and is helped to plan and prepare food for all to enjoy.

There is a strong emphasis on creating a family atmosphere and giving children a sense of belonging. Children eat meals, spend time and go on outings together. Children have formed supportive and caring friendships with one another. Children and staff get on well. Two children have pet rabbits, which live in the 'chill room'. This all contributes to the home's relaxed atmosphere.

Staff help children to stay in touch with their families and other people who are important to them. Staff understand that creating positive opportunities for children to connect with their families is important for their identity and well-being.

The home is warm, inviting and decorated to a high standard. Children personalise their rooms. The registered manager has agreed to review a plan to install door alarms on bedroom doors, which would be at odds with the family feel of the home. Should these be installed at a later date, consent from the local authority and the children's views should be sought.

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

Managers and staff provide a calm, safe and stable base for children. Staff are trained in a therapeutic model of care. There is a focus on building and maintaining trusting relationships. Small steps are celebrated by staff. Children trust staff and feel more

comfortable and secure. Children make progress with their interactions with adults and peers. They learn to navigate social situations more effectively.

Children's plans reflect their needs and provide staff with clear guidance. The management and staff team are proactive and curious about understanding children's behaviours. Staff have meaningful conversations with children about risks. As a result, children's needs, risks, strengths and vulnerabilities are well understood.

Missing-from-home incidents have reduced and are managed well. Staff take proactive steps to contact children when they go missing and encourage their prompt and safe return home. Some children allow the registered manager to track their whereabouts via their mobile phones, which further enhances their safety.

Staff recruitment procedures follow safer recruitment guidelines, which provides assurance that the staff who are caring for the children are suitably vetted.

Incidents of concern are not consistently recorded in a way that makes it easy to track progress and understand the child's views. In the past, incidents of self-harm have not always been shared with health services. This means that they may not be recorded on the child's health record and potential support may not be offered.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been several changes of manager since the last inspection. The home now benefits from strong leadership and management. The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced for the position.

The registered manager has been in post since August 2023. She spends good-quality time with the children as well as maintaining managerial responsibilities. She is child-focused, empathetic and committed to the children she provides care for.

Staff have regular and effective supervision sessions. They discuss the children's needs as well as their own development and learning. There are regular team meetings and support from an in-house therapist is available. Staff morale is positive. They feel supported by the management team.

All staff are trained in safeguarding, medication administration and health and safety, in addition to being trained in a therapeutic model of care. They are trained to use physical intervention, when necessary, but this is rarely used.

Agency staff are not used. Consequently children benefit from having consistent staff and they know who will be caring for them. The registered manager has created an ethos for the home that is child-centred and focuses on meeting the needs of children. This results in an environment where children can thrive. The staff are dedicated and committed to the children.

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

Recommendations

- 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 plan 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 the specific responsibilities of the home towards supporting the health and well-being of each child are agreed with the placing authority and recorded in the child's placement plan. It is the joint responsibility of the registered person and the placing authority that these are agreed at the time of placement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.7)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: Catherine Neal

Inspector

Matilda Clode, Social Care Inspector

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