

2629230

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands 1) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. It provides care for up to 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2023.

The 2 children living at the home were seen by the inspector.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 March 2026

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

Date of last inspection: 10 and 11 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2024	Full	Good
20/06/2023	Full	Good
26/04/2023	Full	Inadequate
26/05/2022	Full	Good
11/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from staff who understand their needs and provide calm, nurturing and consistent care. Consequently, they make good progress from their starting points.

Careful thought is given to the way that children move into and out of the home. One child has moved from the home since the last inspection. The move was planned and supported by staff, and as a result, the child felt positive and valued. The child remains in regular contact, reflecting the strong, trusting relationships built with both the registered manager and the staff team.

Children make progress with their learning. The staff work well with educational professionals, and this contributes to the progress children make. For example, one child has received the support he needed to improve his predicted grades. When children experience barriers to accessing education, managers advocate for them in the way a good parent would. As a result, one child whose education was being provided via a tutor coming to the home has recently taken up a school place.

Children enjoy taking part in a variety of activities both within the home and the community. They are supported to try new experiences that enable them to be active and have fun. During the inspection, one child was observed with staff playing football in the garden. The child said his experience of living in the home is '1 million out of 10', reflecting his sense of happiness and belonging.

Children benefit from living in comfortable and nurturing surroundings. The home has recently been extended into the adjoining property, providing children with a spacious, well-maintained and child-friendly environment. An innovative 'regulation zone' has recently been added to the physical environment to give children space to develop their self-regulation skills. Children's bedrooms are personalised, and photos of the children are displayed in communal areas. This helps children feel valued and contributes to them feeling proud of their home.

External professionals speak positively about the quality of care provided to children. During the inspection, one professional described a child as 'happy and comfortable with staff', adding that 'It felt like the child was loved and well cared for.'

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

A therapeutic model of care underpins the support provided to children and helps to ensure that staff respond to children in a consistent and informed way and that children are encouraged to express their views about their care.

Children's plans are subject to ongoing review. This ensures that staff have access to accurate and current information about children's care. This contributes to a consistent approach to safeguarding, which helps children to feel safe.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of each child's individual risks and vulnerabilities, which enables them to provide appropriate, individualised support to children. Children have a consistent daily routine, which provides structure and predictability and they benefit from the stability that this gives them.

Staff are appropriately trained in the use of physical intervention. On occasions when interventions have been necessary to keep children safe, these have been used only as a last resort. Staff respond with a nurturing approach and a focus on repairing relationships quickly. The registered manager ensures oversight of these incidents and ensures that reflective practice informs learning.

Children are helped to keep safe online. Staff have a good understanding of online risks and educate children on how they can keep themselves safe. There are safe systems in place to reduce and identify risks. As a result, children have safer online experiences.

Allegations about staff are professionally managed. Investigations are appropriately undertaken and information is shared with external agencies to ensure timely action. This promotes children's safety.

The registered manager and clinical team have worked to upskill staff to understand their roles and responsibilities in caring for and safeguarding children in line with the providers model of care. Overall, this has had a positive impact for children, with staff managing incidents well. However, on one occasion, a lapse in supervision placed a child at risk of harm and resulted in police involvement. This incident could have been avoided. A thorough response by the registered manager supported staff to engage in reflective learning to reduce risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager knows the children well and is proud of their achievements. She is highly aspirational for children and is motivated to secure the best for them. She is a strong advocate and is committed to ensuring that children consistently receive the care, support and opportunities they deserve. The registered manager is actively involved in children's lives and promotes the home's model of care, ensuring that children's needs are understood and that their wishes and feelings remain central to decision-making. As a result, children experience care that is responsive, nurturing, and firmly focused on supporting their progress.

The registered manager has a clear vision for the home and is highly respected by the team, who say that she creates a positive culture. Staff feel well supported and heard, and say that this contributes to a genuinely homely environment where children are

happy. When an incident occurred that negatively impacted staff, managers responded promptly to help ensure that risk was mitigated for everyone in the home.

Staff have access to a range of relevant training and benefit from regular practice supervision. Team meetings and training focus on enhancing the skills of staff to maintain care tailored to meet children's individual needs. In addition, the use of research-based practice by staff is actively promoted by the registered manager. For example, a child was supported to explore topics such as the impact of self-criticism on the brain, and as a result developed greater insight into how to manage their emotions.

Professionals involved with the children are highly complimentary about the commitment shown by the team in meeting children's needs. The registered manager works exceptionally well with other professionals and prioritises a collaborative approach. One professional highlighted that the positive relationships have enabled excellent partnership working and make the home their child's safe space.

There were no requirements or recommendations raised as a result of this inspection.

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: 2629230

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands 1) Limited

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

Responsible individual: Nikita Allin

Registered manager: Kirsty Johnson-Green

Inspector

Sharon Douglas, Social Care Inspector

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