

2629230

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to two children aged between eight and 18 years who experience social and emotional difficulties.

A registered manager is in post. She is taking planned absence from work. An interim manager is in day-to-day charge of the home and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

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: 26 April 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Following the previous inspection, no higher enforcement action was taken by Ofsted.

The purpose of this full inspection was to evaluate the steps the provider has taken to meet the requirements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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

Two children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. Both have been living at the home since the last inspection.

The children are attending school full time and are making good progress. Staff collaborate well with teachers to understand how to support children's reading and literacy skills and overcome any barriers to learning.

Children have good relationships with staff. The supportive environment of the home encourages children to have fun and make happy memories. Children take part in a range of activities, including spending time playing in the garden, making friends at the local youth club and attending football matches.

Staff promote children's health and well-being. When one child was worried about attending a health appointment, staff carried out a range of direct work that focused on the importance of attending appointments and how to reduce anxieties. The support offered to the child resulted in the child attending her appointments.

Staff recognise the importance of children maintaining contact with their family and loved ones. Staff ensure that time spent together is positive, and they arrange enjoyable activities. One parent rated the staff as '10 out of 10' and said that they go 'above and beyond'.

The manager has worked with the children to improve the decor of the home. The children have personalised their bedrooms, and memorable photos are displayed in communal spaces. There are plans for additional refurbishment work to take place. This home is a place where children can feel comfortable.

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

The quality of children's risk assessments has improved since the last inspection. The written plans give staff an outline of children's presenting risks and behaviours and clear supporting strategies. During the inspection, staff demonstrated that they have a good understanding of children's risks and told the inspectors that they find the plans informative. Clear guidance has helped to improve consistency in how staff work to keep children safe.

Since the last inspection, children have not made any allegations or complaints. Managers have ensured that the allegation that was uncovered at the last inspection has been investigated, and appropriate action has been taken to safeguard children living in the home. Furthermore, managers and staff have had reflective discussions about what steps to follow if a child makes an allegation to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities when keeping children safe.

Relationships are based on staff encouraging and rewarding children's positive behaviour. Staff recognise the children's achievements and promote opportunities for children to receive praise. During the inspection, one child benefited from a recognition reward of a favoured sensory toy. Since the last inspection, there have been no incidents requiring physical intervention to keep children safe.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When children do leave the home without consent, staff take appropriate action to safeguard them. The staff record the steps that they have taken and work collaboratively with the police, family members and local authority. When children return, staff are thoughtful of children's needs and ensure that they are provided the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings. This ensures that children feel supported and helps the manager and staff to gain information to reduce future risks.

Children live in a physically safe environment. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks to ensure the safety of the home. The manager has a location risk assessment. However, the manager has failed to consider known criminal activity in the local area. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that any potential risks posed to children are fully assessed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, the manager has applied for registration with Ofsted. The manager is child focused and wants children to have a positive experience when living at the home.

Following the last inspection, managers reflected on the shortfalls found and compiled a detailed action plan. This has supported the manager in making improvements and recognising further areas for development. This practice demonstrates an improvement in the management oversight of the care provided to children.

Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the staff team. The manager has recruited to the vacant positions and the current staff team is stable. When there have been staff shortages, the manager has either covered the shifts herself or used the same temporary staff to provide children with continuity of care.

The manager understands the importance of a skilled workforce. Since the last inspection, the manager has ensured that all staff are up to date with mandatory training. In addition, the manager has introduced learning workshops on topics such as record-keeping, internet safety and safeguarding.

The manager works effectively in partnership with a range of professionals. Professionals are positive about the care and support that the children receive and the level of communication. Professionals told inspectors that they have seen improvements in the behaviour and confidence of the children living at the home.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the review of the location includes the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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) Limited

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

Responsible individual: Nikita Tidswell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

Tara Weston, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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