

2695308

Registered provider: Core Children Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to 3 children who have had adverse childhood experiences. The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2024.

One child lives in the home, and they acknowledged the inspector during the visit.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 February 2026

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	good
---	------

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

Date of last inspection: 29 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/04/2024	Full	Outstanding
24/04/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

No children have moved in or out of the home. One child has lived in the home for over 3 years. The child makes good progress in their education from their starting point and has sustained this progress over time. The manager is a strong advocate and challenges partner agencies appropriately to ensure that the child's educational needs are met. One professional commented on the manager's commitment, stating, 'The manager has engaged in several college visits and wants the best outcomes for the young person.'

Staff and managers prioritise the child's health and emotional wellbeing. The manager seeks external support when required and promotes a strong multi-agency approach to care planning. As a result, the child receives the therapeutic input they need, which helps them to regulate their emotions more effectively and feel more settled. Consequently, the child's emotional stability has improved, and they are now better able to manage daily life.

The child enjoys a wide range of meaningful experiences both in the home and in the community. They benefit from activities such as holidays, attending Premier League football matches and taking part in other outings that broaden their experiences and support their development. As a result, the child gains confidence, develops new skills and enjoys positive memories that enhance their overall progress.

Staff respond sensitively to the child as they explore their identity. They provide appropriate guidance and ensure that the child's individual needs are understood and supported. This helps the child to feel accepted and promotes the development of a positive sense of identity.

The child is able to share their views, wishes and feelings, and these are acted on in some areas. For example, when the child asked to see a parent, staff contacted the social worker promptly. However, the child is not consistently supported to contribute to their care planning in ways that are appropriate to their age and level of understanding. Adaptive tools are not used to help them understand plans or influence future decisions. This limits the child's ability to express their views and influence their own plans. Therefore, opportunities for meaningful participation in their future are missed.

Staff and managers work hard to provide a homely and nurturing environment, and necessary adaptations are made to ensure safety. However, when restrictions or environmental safety measures are implemented, there is no clear evidence that these are reviewed regularly or that timescales are set for their continuation. As a result, the child may not fully understand why restrictions are in place or when they may change, which can reduce their sense of control and certainty.

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

The child is supported by a motivated and consistent staff team who know them well. Positive and nurturing interactions were observed during the visit. These strong relationships help the child to experience greater emotional stability and enable them to respond positively to trusted adults. Consequently, the child feels settled and is better able to self-regulate.

The manager is relentless in seeking professional support to better understand the child's behaviour. External support and assessments are sourced promptly, and the resulting recommendations are incorporated into the child's behaviour support plans. Risk management plans are clear, well informed by professional guidance and research, and provide staff with practical strategies. Staff are appropriately trained to implement these measures, and a multi-agency approach is used to manage risks. As a result, staff respond to risks with confidence and consistency, leading to a significant reduction in physical interventions.

When staff do need to intervene, the least amount of force is used and holds are proportionate to the level of risk. The child and staff have opportunities to reflect after incidents, and the child is encouraged to express any concerns.

When the child raises a complaint about staff, it is taken seriously and appropriate agencies are consulted. On one occasion, there was a delay in consulting the local authority designated officer following a comment made by the child. The manager addressed this shortfall promptly.

Self-harm risk assessments provide clear strategies for staff to follow. However, during one incident involving the child, staff did not respond proactively to retrieve an item being used to threaten harm. The manager took appropriate action following this incident to help reduce the risk of further similar incidents occurring.

Consequences are generally used appropriately. However, there are no clear time frames or review dates for some measures. This creates a risk that consequences may become open-ended rather than restorative and proportionate. Consequently, the child may experience uncertainty about how long measures will last, which can reduce their sense of fairness and safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a child-centred and dedicated manager. He is ambitious for the child and fosters a culture of continuous learning and development within the staff team.

Supervisions and team meetings take place regularly and are used effectively for reflection, learning and discussing staff wellbeing. Staff speak positively about the support they receive from leaders and managers, and they describe the home as a positive place to work.

The child has previously experienced instability due to several staff leaving the home. The manager has worked hard to recruit and train a consistent staff team. A stable team is now in place, which has strengthened continuity of care. This has contributed to the child feeling settled, secure and able to make sustained progress.

Leaders and managers use a range of monitoring and reviewing systems that provide effective oversight of the home's operations. The manager has a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development and holds an ambitious vision for ongoing improvement.

Professionals and family members are complimentary about the support provided by the manager and staff. They recognise the positive impact that the home has on the child's progress. One professional commented that the manager 'supports their [the child's] SEND needs so that barriers are removed and the young person can access all opportunities.'

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; help each child to prepare for any review of the child's relevant plans and to make the child's views, wishes and feelings known for the purposes of that review. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(vi)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the child is supported to contribute to decisions about their care and future planning in a way that is appropriate to their age, cognitive ability and understanding.	15 May 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that the child understands the consequences applied by staff, and that each consequence is kept under review and revised where appropriate. This specifically requires the registered person to ensure that all consequences are time-limited, proportionate and include a clear review so that children understand how positive behaviour leads to restoration. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- Children's homes staff should take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on individual needs and developmental stage about when to allow a child to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. This specifically relates to staff implementing preventative strategies to remove and reduce immediate risks rather than relying on reactive measures ('Guide to the Children's homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.7).
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair. This specifically relates to the regular review of restrictions or environmental safety measures to evidence that they remain necessary, proportionate and the least restrictive ('Guide to the Children's Homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36).

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: 2695308

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Core Children Ltd

Registered provider address: The Glades, Festival Way, Festival Park, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST1 5SQ

Responsible individual: Lyndan Whiston

Registered manager: Steven Fisher

Inspector

Nateisha Cardoza-Evans, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026