

2700000

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.

At the time of this visit, one child was living in the home. The inspector observed the child with staff on both days of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2024 and holds a leadership and management qualification at level 5.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 4 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2025	Full	Outstanding
07/06/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children settle here long term, and they make exceptional progress as a result of the high standard of care they receive. Managers and staff are highly invested in ensuring children are afforded every opportunity to achieve their full potential in all areas.

Since the last inspection, 3 children and young people have moved on from the home, and one child has moved in. Every aspect of children and young people's moves out of the home are planned with exceptional care and attention to detail. Managers work collaboratively with other professionals to ensure that each child is fully prepared for their next stage of life. Staff offer children ongoing emotional and practical support for as long as it is needed. These long-term relationships help children to feel valued, loved and nurtured by adults who know them well.

Effective and thoughtful care planning has enabled the child currently living in the home to settle quickly and feel safe and secure. There is a strong sense of the child within the home and lots of touches create a homely feel. The child's personality is reflected, and their games, photos and belongings are proudly on display. This achieves a real sense of permanence and belonging for the child.

The child's relationship with staff is filled with emotional warmth and good humour. Staff and the child share an evening meal around the kitchen table. Staff ask the child about their day and continually joke with them. Strong bonds are created through staff and the child sharing activities such as skateboarding and playing pool. These strong, positive relationships provide the child with a secure base from which they make significant progress.

Managers and staff understand the importance of family to children. Staff work proactively and sensitively to help the child to build, maintain, and where appropriate, re-establish relationships with the people who matter most to them. This has a very positive impact on children's wellbeing, and their sense of identity and provides them with a secure base from which they make significant progress. A parent said that staff went 'above and beyond' in the care of their child and said that managers and staff supported the child with 'everything she needed'.

Staff consultation with children is exemplary because they take time to understand each child's preferred method of communication. For example, staff used text messaging and incorporated animal-assisted activities to help one child to express their views about all aspects of their care. This creative and sensitive approach enabled the child to build trusting relationships and to grow in confidence and develop clear aspirations for their future.

Managers proactively take decisive action when they feel a child has an unmet health need. For example, managers advocated for an assessment of the sensory needs of the child currently living in the home. This was shared with the child in an age-appropriate way. The child now has a better understanding of their own responses and has trusted strategies to better manage their emotional health and wellbeing.

Managers and staff support children to explore what makes them uniquely them. For example, they support children's choice of clothing and music. Children have ample opportunity to experience a range of new things, enjoy new activities and pursue their own interests. These experiences promote curiosity, self-worth and confidence in children's own abilities. Additionally, staff record a positive comment or observation every day in a bespoke book that children take with them when they leave. This enables children to relive happy memories and special achievements and is an important addition to their understanding of their life story.

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

Children's safety is prioritised by staff who understand their roles and responsibilities to protect them. Clear safety plans are in place and staff remain vigilant to any indicators that children may be at risk of harm.

Managers and staff apply research to understand what lies behind the complex behaviours of the child currently living in the home. Over time, they have developed a range of creative strategies, clearly recorded in the child's risk management plans and shared with the child, that guide staff to de-escalate these behaviours effectively. This evidence-led approach has positively led to a significant decrease in the number, length and severity of incidents.

Managers' monitoring of incidents when children show complex behaviours is extremely effective in improving staff practice and the quality of care. Following all incidents, managers talk with staff and children. They are professionally curious and they reflect on how things could be managed better in the future. Additionally, excellent and creative partnership working means that the child gets the right support when they need it. As a result, the child's complex behaviours at school have also reduced. The child's headteacher said that communication from the home is 'outstanding'. They said: 'I can't fault them for the work they've done. They do everything for [the child's] best interests.'

High-quality, consistent and trusting relationships with staff mean that children rarely go missing from the home. This has happened twice since the last inspection. When children go missing, staff are persistent in contacting the child and known people. They search known areas and when the child returns or is brought back, staff show their concern and give the child a warm welcome. Children are then given an opportunity to speak with an independent person. There is strong oversight from the manager, who uses all available information to reduce the risk for the child of further missing episodes.

When children are at risk online, safeguarding processes are followed and information is shared with safeguarding professionals, including the police. Important discussions and workshops are held with children to educate them about risks and dangers and to increase their knowledge and safety. These focussed and well researched conversations reduce children's vulnerability to on-line risks and exploitation.

Children's worries are listened to. When a child makes an allegation or a complaint about the conduct of a staff member, their concerns are taken seriously. A thorough investigation takes place, and the outcome of the investigation is shared with the child. Managers maintain strong oversight of staff recruitment, including the recruitment of agency staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has high aspirations for the children and young people in her care. She advocates for them in the way a good parent would. She uses a range of monitoring systems to oversee every aspect of the care children receive and continually seeks to improve their experiences and life chances. This approach supports children to make significant progress from their starting points.

The manager has developed strong relationships with families and other agencies. She works hard to promote a collaborative approach to meeting children's needs. This ensures that children's needs are met promptly and that they have strong, well-informed networks of support. Feedback from professionals is overwhelmingly positive. One social worker said: 'Professionally, the team demonstrated excellent practice at all times, maintaining clear and timely communication, attending all meetings, and robustly advocating on the young person's behalf.'

The manager takes the wellbeing of the staff seriously. She ensures that staff are well supported through regular supervision, team meetings, clinical reflections and training relevant to children's needs. Because of this, staff feel incredibly well supported. They say the manager is approachable, and that they like working in the home. One staff member said: 'Genuinely, it's a great house and I'm really happy here.' This ensures that children consistently receive excellent care from staff who are motivated and knowledgeable.

The child currently living in the home has received exceptionally consistent care. A stable longstanding staff group have worked in the home since the child came to live there. The manager supports the staff to work collaboratively, and staff morale is exceptionally high. Team meetings are focused on the child, and the manager promotes stability for the child by presenting staff with scenarios of safeguarding and talking about the importance of routines and consistency for children who are affected by trauma. The manager is passionate about developing the potential of all staff and wants them to succeed. All staff have an annual and a probation appraisal focused on their individual goals. Staff are well supported to flourish and progress within the organisation.

No requirements or recommendations were made at 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: 2700000

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: Rebecca Fairclough

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector

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