

2728263

Registered provider: Vesta Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for one child who experiences emotional, behavioural and/or social difficulties.

The manager is suitably experienced and has been registered since January 2025. They are working towards a relevant qualification.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 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	good
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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 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The child has made exceptional and sustained progress from a difficult starting point. Staff have created a warm, nurturing environment, provide high-quality care and are attuned to the needs of the child.

Staff go over and above to ensure that the child is supported in their education. The manager and staff are strong advocates for the child and communication with their school is excellent. Before living in this home, the child had not attended school for several years. Staff have high aspirations for the child and have worked flexibly and creatively with their school. The creative support and dedication of staff have helped the child to maintain their school place. They are now consistently going to school, with excellent attendance and making exceptional progress academically. The child is proud of the progress they are making. They said, 'I am in full-time school now because the manager has fought for me. I was out of school for 3 years and now I am predicted good grades.'

The child has begun to build strong, trusting relationships, attachments and a sense of belonging. This is because staff are confident and skilled in using therapeutic approaches adapted to the individual needs of the child. Staff have a strong and thorough understanding of the home's model of care, which is embedded in daily practice. Staff are trauma informed and this is evident in the empathic conversations that they have with the child. Both the child and staff are comprehensively supported by an in-house therapist.

The child's individual identity and cultural needs are promoted positively and the importance of these is fully understood by staff. For example, staff support the child to attend a weekly dance class in their hometown, which is a considerable distance away. This has helped the child feel connected to their cultural heritage and has improved their confidence. Staff are committed to helping the child build lasting memories and their individual interests are consistently promoted and encouraged. Staff frequently create opportunities for new and fun experiences, which are recorded in memory books. This ensures that the child can look back on their positive experiences and will help them understand their journey during their time living at the home.

Staff and managers understand and value the significance of the child's relationships with their family and friends. Communication between staff and the child's family is exemplary. Staff work in partnership with the family, which ensures that the child regularly spends safe and positive time with people who are important to them. One parent said, 'I cannot praise the staff highly enough. They have worked with [name of child] determinedly and helped them so much. The manager's communication is brilliant.'

The child's views and wishes are highly valued and are used to inform the support and care they receive. As a result, the child is confident in expressing their thoughts and

experiences. When the child raises concerns, these are responded to by the staff and manager in a timely and thorough way. For example, when the child said they would like to raise lower-level concerns about their care without making a formal complaint, the manager and child agreed on a new creative way to do this. The child said that they appreciate this new way to share any smaller worries and that these are responded to quickly by managers and staff.

The child has been provided with meticulously planned support from staff to develop their independence in line with their individual needs. The child's views have been at the centre of planning for their increased independence. As a result of the exceptional and skilled support from staff, the child is now able to safely spend increased time in the community, following a period of significant restriction.

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

A strong safeguarding culture is embedded in day-to-day practice in the home. This is because the manager and staff have a strong and thorough understanding of the child's individual risks and vulnerabilities and their own roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. As a result, risks for the child have reduced significantly over their time living in this home.

The strong and trusting relationships staff have with the child are key to keeping them safe. Because of this, the child has not gone missing since living in this home, which was previously a significant concern. When staff have become aware that the child may go missing, they take swift and effective action to prevent this from happening. Staff practice is guided by comprehensive support plans which the child contributes to. These are informed by a detailed understanding of the child's needs and vulnerabilities. Staff and managers work efficiently and proactively with external agencies to ensure the support provided to the child remains effective and appropriate.

Staff and managers take a proactive approach to safeguarding concerns. When the child reports a concern about staff practice, this is taken seriously and is shared with the appropriate agencies. The manager completes a comprehensive review using research and the reflective cycle. This ensures learning is taken from these events and used to improve and develop practice and staff knowledge and skills.

Staff have an extensive knowledge of vulnerabilities in relation to using the internet, and they have creatively and persistently supported the child to improve their understanding of online safety. This is supported by the meticulous training and plans that the manager provides to staff. They respond swiftly if there are concerns about the child's online activity. As a result of the excellent support from staff, the child is now more able to spend time online safely in an age-appropriate manner, which was something they previously struggled to manage.

The unconditional positive regard that staff have for the child is evident throughout the home. Consequences are used restoratively. Staff focus on reinforcing positive behaviour through praise, encouragement and rewards. Staff are proud of the child's progress and

celebrate this with them. The child has a life-story book with photos of special events and achievements, for example, when the child performed in a dance show and when they organised a baby shower for a staff member in the home.

When there was a concern relating to substance misuse, staff took immediate and effective action to safeguard the child. The manager provided staff with in-depth training to ensure that they were alert to future signs of substance abuse. As a result, staff provide the child with cohesive and effective support, and this has not been an ongoing issue. However, after this incident, referrals to external agencies were not escalated soon enough by managers. This did not impact on the child's safety and the risk to the child in relation to substance misuse has continued to significantly reduce over time due to the quality of the support from staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a committed and inspirational manager and a supportive responsible individual. The manager ensures that a culture of learning and improvement is evident throughout the home. Staff are positive about their experience of working in the home. One staff member said, 'The manager motivates me and I can share any worries that I have. We learn from mistakes, which has improved my skills.'

The manager and the home's therapist provide staff with regular reflective supervision. Team meetings are underpinned by research and contribute to children making progress. The manager asks senior staff members to deliver training in specialist areas each month. These areas align with the child's needs and provide staff with specialist knowledge which ensures the quality of care in the home continues to develop and improve.

The manager ensures that staff are appropriately skilled and experienced. As a result, the child receives consistent and effective care. Staff benefit from a wide range of training opportunities, which are tracked effectively by the manager. Most staff achieve the relevant qualification within the required timescales. One staff member who is out of this timescale will be enrolled once they have completed their probation period.

External professionals provided positive feedback about the manager and staff team. Managers and staff have worked hard to develop reliable relationships with partner agencies. The child's social worker said, 'Communication is great with the manager, she is always available. The team tailor their support to [name of child].' The manager is a staunch advocate for the child, and this has significantly contributed to the child's progress.

The manager generally has good oversight of all aspects of the care provided. Efficient and appropriate monitoring systems are in place, and she continually seeks to improve practice and enhance the quality of care the child receives.

Since the last inspection, agency and bank staff have been used regularly. In addition, there have been changes to the permanent staff team. Due to the skills and experience

of the core staff team and the strength of management oversight, these staffing issues do not appear to have impacted on the consistency of care provided to the child. Staff and managers have spoken to the child sensitively about changes to the staff team. The manager ensures that the child can say goodbye when staff leave the home, with events such as leaving meals and by involving the child in organising parties. However, despite this, the child said they have found these changes difficult at times.

The manager and responsible individual had not identified this as an area for development. They now recognise that this is something they need to address to ensure that the child continues to receive good-quality and consistent care in the long term.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. Staffing structures should promote continuity of care from the child's perspective. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)
- The registered person should ensure any external agency staff meet the requirements in regulation 32(4) regarding mandatory qualifications and consider their skills and the qualifications necessary before they start work in the home. The use of agency staff should be carefully monitored and reviewed to ensure children receive continuity of care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)
- The registered person should record what they have done to achieve engagement from external agencies, including any action taken to escalate concerns. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.3)

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: 2728263

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Vesta Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: ABC Tools & Fasteners, Unit 4, Emma Court, Dewsbury Road, Fenton Industrial Estate, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2TH

Responsible individual: Andrew Beechey

Registered manager: Rebecca Danks

Inspector

Jenny Smith, Social Care Inspector

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