

2730741

Registered provider: Core Children Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. It is registered to provide care for up to two children who may have adverse childhood experiences that can lead to associated trauma and social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted to manage the home since February 2024 and is appropriately qualified.

At the time of the inspection, no children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 July 2025

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: 6 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/01/2025	Full	Good
23/01/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child living in the home at the time of the last inspection, has recently moved on. Managers served notice because the child's complex behaviours escalated, and managers and staff could no longer keep them safe. Although the child moved on earlier than planned, managers worked with social workers to manage the child's escalating risks and provide nurturing care until a suitable alternative placement was found. Therefore, the child moved in a planned way to a home that could better meet their needs.

The child made progress from their starting point. Their social worker said trusting relationships with staff were initially difficult to build due to the child's previous experiences. Staff worked hard to get to know the child and to understand what was important to them. This helped the child to feel valued and listened to. The social worker was complementary about the manager and staff, stating there was nothing they could have done better.

Staff worked creatively with the child to overcome barriers to learning. They supported the child with home-based education with a tutor, and with daily learning activities tailored to the child's interests. The manager supported the child to develop aspirations for their future by actively advocating for the child to access college education

Staff were proactive in helping the child to sustain relationships that matter to them. This includes support to maintain family contact. They supported the child to make good choices in their friendships by talking to the child about peer pressure, positive friendships and healthy relationships.

The child was encouraged to express their views and influence their care planning. Staff used innovative approaches to enable communication, including supporting the child to write notes to put in a suggestion box when face-to-face discussions were difficult. This helped the child to express their views on areas such as choosing activities, requesting a visit from a friend and expressing when they felt sad.

The home is bright, well-maintained and welcoming. Communal areas are comfortable social places with high quality soft furnishing where children and staff can relax together. Children's bedrooms offer children privacy and comfort. This contributes positively to children's sense of safety and belonging.

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

Staff manage the child's risks and respond to their complex behaviours. Staff update plans when risk escalate, and new risks emerge. Additionally, managers have regular, at

times daily, conversations with staff to ensure they always have the most up to date information about the child's evolving behaviours.

Staff use physical intervention only when necessary to protect the child from harm. At times incidents have been frequent and prolonged, but oversight from leaders is robust. Managers monitor interventions to ensure they are appropriate and proportionate, and then use this information to inform risk planning and to plan additional training for staff.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the factors that contribute to the child going missing. They use proactive and nurturing approaches to divert and engage the child through offering nurture and activities that the child enjoys. When the child goes missing, staff respond promptly and follow the child's individualised protocol. They notify relevant professionals, including the police, without delay and actively search for the child to help ensure their safe return. Staff then give the child a warm and supportive welcome, and they tell the child they were worried and are pleased the child is home. This shows genuine concern for the child's wellbeing and re-enforces the importance of their safety.

Managers promote a culture of openness and accountability. When staff practice falls below expected standards, managers have honest conversations. They reflect with staff both individually and in group discussions and team meetings. They then give staff clear guidance for improvement. This fosters a learning environment in which staff understand the importance of vigilance and consistent boundaries.

Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. When the child displays behaviours that indicate distress and vulnerability, staff are vigilant, and they respond quickly when intervention is required to keep the child safe. They then reassure the child and ensure the child receives the care and support they need.

Staff have regular important conversations with the child about keeping safe online. They encourage the child to complete their own research and to educate themselves about the risks from all aspects of social media. Staff work closely with the child's social worker and other professionals to implement agreed protocols when online risks increase. This ensures that the child's online risks are fully understood, and the child is protected.

Leaders act promptly when a child raises an allegation or concern, notifying the child's social worker and the designated officer without delay. They undertake thorough, effective investigations and ensure the child is kept informed of each outcome. This thoughtful, transparent approach reassures the child that their voice matters and that they are both valued and heard.

Systems for the administration of medication are safe and effective. Staff follow clear procedures, and records are maintained to ensure children's health needs are met.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is a passionate and committed leader who places the child at the heart of the home's practice. He has built effective relationships with partner agencies contributing to strong multi-agency working and well-coordinated support for the child. Professionals are complimentary about the manager. The child's social worker said, 'Communication is excellent at all times.' A specialist worker said, 'They worked so well with us and did a good job of keeping the child safe.' These positive views reflect the manager's strong leadership and ability to foster a culture of safety, collaboration and child-focused care.

Staff feel valued and supported by leaders and managers. They say managers are responsive and approachable, 'They provide everything we need, but they're also part of our team.' Despite the challenges of supporting a child with complex and escalating behaviours, morale across the team remains high. Staff feel confident raising concerns with managers and say these are dealt with promptly.

Staff benefit from regular, good-quality face-to-face supervision that promotes their professional development and well-being. In addition, managers engage staff in recorded 'job chats' which provide further opportunity for open dialogue. These sessions are used effectively to discuss a range of topics, including health and emotional wellbeing, recognition of good practice, and instruction on risk management. This supportive approach contributes to staff feeling valued, and well-equipped to meet the needs of the child.

Since the last inspection, four staff have left and five have been recruited. The manager and core staff have provided consistent care and stability, which has helped the child feel secure. At times, additional staff have been needed to meet the child's complex needs. Familiar staff from other homes within the organisation have been used, and the reliance on agency staff has remained minimal.

Of a staff team of seven, one has achieved the required qualification and three are enrolled. Managers have mentored and guided this relatively inexperienced staff team, helping them to build confidence and competence. During periods when the child's behaviours have escalated, staff have remained resilient, consistent and focused on the child's needs.

The manager has established effective systems to monitor the quality of care for the child. He has a clear overview of the home's strengths and areas that require development. Monitoring activity is purposeful and informs decision-making, allowing the manager to implement well-considered action plans that support continuous improvement.

All staff have completed training in the company's therapeutic model of care, which underpins their day-to-day practice. Staff have also received face-to-face training in essential areas relating to safeguarding. In addition, staff have attended bespoke

workshops tailored to the needs of the child. This comprehensive and responsive approach to training ensures that staff are equipped to meet the child's complex needs safely and effectively.

No requirements or recommendations have been 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: 2730741

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: Richard Hill

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, 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 2025