

2731026

Registered provider: Core Children Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home was registered on 10 August 2023 to provide care for 2 children aged between 5 and 17 who may experience emotional and social difficulties.

The registered manager is suitably qualified.

At the time of the inspection, there was one child living at the home. The child was spoken to by the inspector.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 January 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

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: 10 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2025	Full	Good
23/01/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff create a highly nurturing home environment in which they develop trusting and affectionate relationships with children. Since coming to live in the home, the child has made outstanding and sustained progress from an extremely difficult starting point.

Managers and staff are highly aspirational for the child. Staff place great importance on education and enthusiastically celebrate the child's successes. Staff diligently advocate for the child to have the opportunity to engage in formal learning and challenge education plans appropriately. Staff always prioritise making education accessible and are extremely creative in the ways that they achieve this. Before living at this home, the child had not attended school for several years. Because of the exceptional and inventive support from staff over a period of time, the child is now enrolled in college, making friends and really enjoying and benefiting from social interaction with peers. The child said that this has had a hugely positive impact on them.

Staff actively encourage the child to participate in activities that support their confidence, social interactions and independence. Staff place significant value and importance on the individual interests of children and have truly invested in getting to know the child living in the home so that activities and events offered reflect their identity. The views of the child are always considered and respected in the home's planning.

Managers and staff are very confident and skilled in using therapeutic approaches adapted to the individual needs of the child. Staff are nurturing, kind and warm in the way that they speak to the child and understand their needs exceptionally well. Staff know how to support them when they are worried or having feelings that they are finding difficult to manage. This means that the child is flourishing and has a sense of belonging. The child is feeling very settled and highly valued, after moving many times before coming to live in this home.

Staff consistently support the child to attend all health appointments. They talk sensitively to the child about the importance of positive physical and mental health, as well as developing consistent self-care skills and routines. Staff have advocated tirelessly for the child to have access to dental treatment which was needed and has now taken place.

Staff consistently encourage the child to plan and prepare their own meals, with support. This means the child is continuously developing their independence skills. The child earns pocket money when they independently complete tasks for themselves, such as tidying their bedroom. Staff use innovative ways to help the child to better understand budgeting, to prepare them for living on their own. The child is now able to manage their own pocket money safely, after a significant period of restrictions.

Managers and staff have a strong understanding of the child's past experiences and how these can impact on them. Managers always ensure that restorative practice is in place so that staff and the child consistently improve their relationships and the child develops their sense of responsibility. This has meant that the child has continued to have positive and respectful relationships with the staff who care for them, making them feel valued, respected and able to build trusting relationships. The child has asked for staff members to go with them on trips to a concert, to local activities and on a planned trip to Europe. Through the home's positive consequence approach, the child worked towards being able to have a pet which they look after. This brings them great joy.

Staff lovingly support the child to maintain relationships with the people who are important to them. Managers and staff truly understand and value the special significance of such relationships and work consistently to maintain these for the child. Managers and staff have gone over and above to support the child to enjoy unsupervised time in the community with their sibling, something that they have wanted to do for a very long time.

The home environment is vibrant, warm and welcoming and decorated to a high standard. Staff have enthusiastically supported the child to decorate their bedroom to reflect their personal interests and tastes, making them feel valued. There are social spaces in the home, a quiet area where the child can complete homework and a shared dining area. Stimulating interactions between the child and staff take place at mealtimes. This creates a sense of belonging for the child, and staff are positive role models.

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

Before the child moved into the home, managers carefully considered their needs in relation to the skills and experience of staff. This means that the child is cared for by staff who have the knowledge to keep them safe. Staff are exceptionally professionally curious. They understand the risks for the child and their own safeguarding responsibilities extremely well. Staff are skilled and confident in being able to talk to the child about how to keep themselves safe. They take account of the child's individual circumstances and previous experiences in thinking about how to do this. Staff always ensure that routines and boundaries in the home are consistent, which helps the child to feel safe. Staff always include the child in thinking about what needs to be done to keep them safe, so they understand the way that risks are managed. This has helped the child to make progress and become safer over time.

When the child moved to live at the home, there were significant restrictions around their unsupervised time, access to the internet and social media. Staff have been dedicated in working with the child to help them understand and reduce risks. Because of this, the child has developed confidence in recognising and responding to situations that may cause them harm. This means that they now have fewer restrictions on their activities and more unsupervised time outside of the home. The child really loves and values these opportunities. The child has had no further episodes of going missing since moving into the home, which was previously a concern. This demonstrates significant progress in their social development and awareness of personal safety.

Staff are incredibly patient and skilled in building strong and positive relationships with the child. They are therefore able to identify trusted adults who they can confide in and knows how to raise a complaint. This helps them to feel safe and valued. Staff are extremely confident in supporting the child to manage difficult feelings. This has helped them to better understand their responses to their emotions and develop some strategies for managing these positively.

Staff receive comprehensive and relevant training so that they understand the potential risks to children online. Staff talk confidently to the child about the risks of using the internet and social media. Because of this, the child understands the decisions made around any plans or restrictions put in place to keep them safe. There are robust and effective systems and processes in place to ensure that the child can access the internet and social media safely. This means that the child now has a mobile phone and is able to use this safely after a period of restrictions, developing their independence and sense of inclusion.

A culture of consultation is embedded in the home. Staff ask the child about their experiences of living in the home and use this to contribute to the daily planning for the home. Managers consistently find innovative ways of doing this when the child does not always want to talk about these things. Managers write to the child to acknowledge their wishes and feelings, reinforcing the value of their contributions and giving them confidence to share their opinions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is very experienced and an excellent role model. Staff describe her as experienced, compassionate, knowledgeable and supportive. They are incredibly resilient and dedicated. The manager advocates relentlessly for the child's needs. They escalate when they need to, to the highest level, to ensure the child's needs are met. Managers are confident in the ability of the staff to care for children with the most complex lived experiences.

The managers are committed to the child. They are highly skilled and professional curiosity is embedded in their practice. When concerns arise, they are thoroughly explored and learning is used to inform future practice and staff development. They go over and above to advocate for the child to make progress and achieve positive outcomes.

The registered manager and staff work effectively in partnership with a range of professionals. There is consistent positive feedback from professionals about the impact their care and support are having on the child. One professional said, 'The child is a totally different child to the child they were before. They are respected and well cared for.'

There are excellent monitoring systems in place. This means that managers can consistently track all actions associated with incidents and support any learning to be

taken forward. Staff receive high-quality regular and reflective supervision. Appraisals are carried out twice yearly and involve a clear development plan for all staff. This means that staff can continue to develop their skills and knowledge to care for children with complex needs. Staff feel well supported by managers and thrive with the opportunities to contribute to the development of the home.

Rigorous safer recruitment processes are in place, meaning that the child is cared for by appropriate adults. Staff working in the home are suitably qualified to care for children with complex needs.

High-quality team meetings provide a platform for reflection and development. Managers regularly introduce new practice models. Development work in the home is built on resources and research. This means that direct work has a significant and positive impact for the child. Managers are forward thinking and innovative with the resources they develop to support the child. For example, a comprehensive independence pack with practical exercises has been developed to prepare them to live independently.

No requirements or recommendations have been made.

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: 2731026

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: Martika Evershed

Inspector

Helen Dickens, 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 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