

2732045

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 three children who have had adverse childhood experiences.

The home was registered in October 2023, and a suitably experienced and qualified manager is in post.

One child lives in the home. They were present throughout the inspection and contributed their views.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 February 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: 6 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/08/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The child has lived in the home for 2½ years and has made exceptional progress from their starting point. Staff understand the positive impact that sharing close and trusting relationships with the child can have on the child's experience and progress. Additionally, staff provide consistent and individualised support to meet the child's needs. The quality of these relationships significantly enhances the child's life chances. The child says they like living at the home and that they like the staff. The child can name staff who they particularly like and who they feel really know who they are.

Managers and staff place the highest priority on the child's education. Staff maintain a high level of communication with teachers, which contributes to the child's progress. As a result of this exceptional partnership working the child now attends full time at a school that meets their needs and has a college place. When the child experiences barriers to learning, staff advocate for them in the way a good parent would. They then reassure the child and tell them they are proud of them. This high level of nurture promotes the child's self-belief and resilience.

The staff team are forward thinking. They work hard to provide experiences, and structure which support the child to acquire independence skills. For example, staff cook with the child, and they set a weekly '£5 challenge' when the child carries out research, shops for and makes a meal for £5 or less. Staff talk with the child about financial responsibility, and they encourage the child to save. They support the child to make additional money by selling clothes in an online marketplace. This innovative support enables the child to be more self-sufficient and to develop a sense of confidence in their future.

The child is consulted on all aspects of their care, and managers and staff respect the child's wishes. The child has access to an advocate and staff support the child to attend and contribute to meetings about their day-to-day care. Additionally, staff tell the child that the child's experiences are important and their voice matters. This constant positive affirmation has given the child the confidence to make and present a presentation to the team during Children's Mental Health Week which partly reflected on the child's own lived experiences.

Staff know the child exceptionally well and are extremely supportive of their health and wellbeing. For example, they have engaged with the child in a healthy eating and exercise regime. Attendance at routine health appointments further promotes good physical health. Staff are pro-active in seeking specialist help when necessary and they consult and carry out research to meet the specific needs of the child. This multi-agency approach means that the child's needs are promoted effectively.

Staff are committed to supporting the child to develop a strong sense of their own identity. They have supported the child's interests in world religions by buying the child

religious texts and taking the child to church. The child has music lessons and recently played drums at a school concert in front of a sizeable audience. Additionally, staff make a meaningful contribution to the child's life story. They maintain a warm, reflective daily diary written directly to the child, capturing positive moments and celebrating the child's achievements. Alongside this, staff thoughtfully compile a personalised photo album that provides a rich and meaningful contribution to the child's life-story.

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

Managers and staff are highly committed and skilled at developing strong, nurturing relationships with the child. Because of the quality of relationships, the child can share any concerns or worries they may have. Exceptionally clear and effective safety plans identify the triggers to the child's complex behaviours and potential risks and, ensures that staff manage them well. Furthermore, the child is involved in and contributes towards their own plans. This provides the child with a sense of ownership and responsibility for their care and a sense of achievement when risks reduce.

Staff use a therapeutic and restorative approach to manage the child's emotions. Clear boundaries and routines and a strong ethos of nurture help with the child's emotional regulation and feelings of anxiety. Furthermore, thorough de-briefs by managers and opportunities for reflection and learning are used extremely well and help further develop staff practice. As a result, incidents requiring physical restraint are rare. However, when restraint is used, it is proportionate and the least restrictive measure, and relationship between staff and the child are quickly repaired.

Staff take swift and effective action when children harm themselves.. . Staff work alongside health professionals and mental health services to implement safety plans and ensure that children receive the appropriate support. This helps children to feel safe, supported and well cared for.

Staff ensure that there are regularly reviewed and updated missing child protocols in place. Additionally, managers proactively share important information with the police, and staff know the actions they should take if a child should go missing from the home.

Staff are exceptionally professionally curious and constantly vigilant about any new or emerging risks. Staff quickly share any safeguarding concerns with relevant agencies, including the police. They participate in multi-agency meetings and implement agreed strategies. This multi-agency approach prevents the child's behaviours from escalating and supports them to make better choices.

Managers and staff work hard to keep the child safe online. They are extremely professionally curious and highly vigilant about the child's online world. Appropriate restrictions on devices and regular discussions and education of the child about online risks support the child to be safe and to keep themselves safe. Additionally, staff keep their skills and knowledge up to date through regular training in bespoke workshops.

When the child has been at risk, managers and staff work in partnership with the police and the child's social worker to reduce and manage risks.

Staff are safely recruited. The manager takes exceptional care to ensure that only suitable people work in the home and extends the same level of scrutiny to agency staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is inspirational and demonstrates strong and effective leadership. She confidently advocates for and is highly committed to improving outcomes for the child. The manager has been a consistent presence in the child's life. She values her relationship with the child who regularly seeks out the manager for reassurance and comfort. This outstanding practice supports the child to feel safe and secure and has resulted in the child thriving, achieving and progressing.

The manager is integral to planning the child's care. As a result, she has developed excellent relationships with partnership agencies. Feedback received was exceptionally positive. The child's social worker said the child's progress is, 'amazing'. They also said, 'I think they've done a fantastic job. They have high aspirations for (name of child). They want them to get on and do well.' A teacher said communication and support from managers and staff is, 'fantastic'. They also said, 'We are in close contact to ensure (name of child) succeeds.'

The management team promotes a culture of high aspiration, positivity and continuous improvement. Oversight of the home is constant and ongoing. The manager has implemented a variety of monitoring systems that allow managers to support staff and to review the quality of care provided to the child effectively. This approach ensures that managers can quickly address any issues and that improvements are continually made to enhance the child's experiences and life chances.

Leaders and managers promote continuity of care for the child. Staff departures from the home have been managed extremely well, ensuring minimal impact on the child. Core staff and one regular agency staff have covered shortfalls in staffing. Staff who are away from the home temporarily for personal reasons visit the child and regularly message them via the house mobile. This thoughtful practice shows great commitment to the child.

The manager is deeply committed to supporting and developing all staff. Supervision sessions are regular and of a high quality. They help staff reflect on their practice and heavily focus on the child's experiences and progress. Staff receive a probation assessment and an annual appraisal as well as a personal development plan focussed on their goals and aspirations. Additionally, the manager is committed to supporting the staff's mental health and wellbeing. She has a qualification as a mental health first aider and ensures that staff have a personalised wellbeing plan. Staff are highly complementary about the manager describing her as 'Absolutely fantastic. I have never had a manager like Holly. She is 100% invested.'

Staff are well trained, and most staff hold a suitable qualification. Others are working towards a suitable qualification. Staff receive a wide range of training, which is specifically identified to meet the child's needs. Additionally, the manager promotes a strong learning culture by regularly presenting research-based workshops in team meetings. Staff then incorporate this learning into practice. As a result, children receive care from highly skilled and knowledgeable staff.

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: 2732045

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: Holly-Jade Turner

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector

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