

2791916

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home registered with Ofsted in November 2024 and is operated by a private organisation. The home provides care for up to 3 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties or have learning disabilities.

The manager also registered with Ofsted in November 2024.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living at the home. All 3 children spent time with the inspector during this inspection.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 June 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/05/2025	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children say they love living in the home and have trusted relationships with the adults caring for them. They have been supported to make progress in their individual communication styles.

Staff provide consistent boundaries and support and, as a result, the children's relationships with each other have improved.

Staff practice at the home is of a good standard. However, they are not always consistent in ensuring the recording and reporting of incidents. Managers do not always ensure that the regulatory body is notified of all serious incidents.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff are committed to providing the children with a caring and nurturing home environment, where they can thrive. Since the last inspection, the brother and sisters have remained living at the home and have made substantial progress across all areas of their development and wellbeing.

Since the last inspection, there has been a noticeable improvement in 2 children's verbal communication. This is attributed to the commitment and support from staff alongside effective multi-agency working.

The home environment is warm and welcoming. The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. The children are encouraged to contribute to decisions about the home environment, which includes personalising their bedrooms to reflect their preferences. This provides children with a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Staff promote children's educational needs. They ensure that children are actively participating in learning tailored to their individual needs. When children have faced barriers to their learning, staff have responded quickly to reduce any impact on their progress.

Staff are well trained to meet the needs of the children in their care. This includes face-to-face discussions with the in-house therapists. These discussions are specific to each child's needs and the impact of any adverse childhood experiences. Also, children benefit from having conversations with the therapist, to help them understand their past experiences. This supports children's sense of identity.

Children are offered a wide range of activities, from going paddleboarding to fun day trips and a theme park. Staff show an active interest in children's preferences, and

shared activities in line with their individual needs. The children also now enjoy taking part in activities together, which has strengthened their bond as brother and sisters.

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

Staff understand children's risks and vulnerabilities. They know how to manage and support children, responding swiftly to emerging concerns, such as self-harm. The manager has clear oversight of any safeguarding incidents and identifies further actions when needed. Staff support children to reflect on incidents, to help them to manage their emotions more effectively. However, staff do not always record and report incidents accurately. The manager has acknowledged this issue and has identified training to equip staff with the skills to improve their practice.

Staff manage children's behaviours well and are consistent in their approach. De-escalation techniques are effective. They use creative strategies to help children when they are upset, which prevent incidents escalating. This helps children to safely manage conflict or difficult feelings.

Physical interventions are used proportionately and as a last resort to keep children safe. Following incidents, discussions take place with the children and staff. This helps ensure that the children's thoughts and feelings inform future practice and that any learning and development for staff are identified.

On one occasion, the manager did not notify the regulatory body of a significant historical incident. Although this information was appropriately reported to the placing authority and action taken, the failure to inform the regulatory body limited their ability to maintain effective oversight of all serious incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced, committed and passionate about achieving good outcomes for children. She provides clear and consistent leadership, ensuring that daily practice runs smoothly and that children's needs are met. The manager is supported by an effective senior leadership team and, together, they oversee a stable staff team that knows the children well.

Staff enjoy working in the home and feel supported. They describe an environment in which they feel valued and listened to. They express pride in their work and speak highly of the children they care for. Staff speak about a strong team ethos that contributes to a stable and nurturing family-oriented environment for children. This positive working atmosphere strengthens the quality of care children receive.

The manager prioritises staff training and ensures that all staff are trained to meet the children's specific needs. She actively promotes ongoing learning and development through regular supervision and team meetings. Staff are encouraged to reflect on

practice, share learning and identify what is working well. This supports continuous improvement in the staff team.

The manager consistently monitors the quality of care provided to the children. She has established effective systems to maintain oversight of the home, allowing her to identify strengths and weaknesses. The manager and her deputy have a good understanding of the children's needs.

Strong partnership working supports children to make positive progress in all aspects of their development. Feedback from external agencies is positive, with staff praised for their dedication and commitment to ensuring that children receive good-quality care.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered persons should seek to involve the local authority and other relevant persons whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. They are also required by regulation 40 to notify placing authorities, Ofsted and other relevant persons about serious events. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.4)

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: 2791916

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Registered provider address: Camomile House, 6 Embassy Drive, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1TP

Responsible individual: Nikita Allin

Registered manager: Rose Whittaker

Inspector

Kate Savage, Social Care Inspector

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