

2806882

Registered provider: Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated and managed by a local authority. It offers care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2024.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2025

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

When children move into the home, staff welcome them sensitively and with care. The home's transition process is well organised and thoroughly planned to meet each child's individual needs. Where possible, staff make visits to children before their move and children are given the opportunity to visit the home, meet staff and familiarise themselves with the environment. When children arrive, staff spend time getting to know children to help them understand children's likes and dislikes.

Children have positive relationships with staff who know them well. Staff offer nurturing, supportive care to the children who are comfortable with staff members. Staff create a warm and positive environment for children using humour. Children have strong relationships with staff, giving each staff member a nickname, which has become a loving and informal way of identifying them.

Children enjoy a range of home-based activities that appeal to their individual interests. Staff take the children on outings and activities in the community. Staff also support children to join clubs so that they can pursue their chosen hobbies. These opportunities support children to develop new skills and help children to socialise within their wider community. This helps to broaden children's experiences and enhance their personal development.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are heard by staff and considered in decision-making processes. Children are involved in creating their care plans, empowering them to be involved in the care that they receive. Staff consistently communicate with children, explaining the reasons behind decisions made about their care. The registered manager regularly talks to children. This is in addition to the support provided by children's key workers. This helps the manager get to know the children well. This approach helps children to feel heard, valued and that their views are respected about all aspects of their care.

Staff are highly committed to ensuring that children's health needs are met. Staff provide children with healthy meals and take the children out on physical activities to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Staff support the children to attend regular routine and specialist health appointments. Staff work closely with external agencies to review and improve medical provision. The registered manager proactively seeks additional training from medical specialists to ensure that staff are confident and competent in meeting children's complex health needs. One hospital team leader praised the impact of the home and said, 'They have completely changed [name of child's] life; [name of child] has gone from a really bad place to completely changing their life since living there.'

Education for children is variable. When barriers to children attending education have been identified, the registered manager works with external agencies to find a solution that works best for the individual child. This includes the registered manager

advocating strongly on children's behalf and escalating her concerns when children's needs are not being met.

Staff recognise and understand the importance of children spending time with people who are important to them. Where appropriate, staff facilitate and supervise family time to ensure that relationships are maintained in a safe and supportive environment. As a result, children enjoy regular, meaningful time with their families and people who are important to them. This supports their sense of self and identity.

The home is a warm and welcoming environment. Staff help children to personalise their bedrooms according to their individual tastes and interests. There are photos of the children and people who are important to them throughout the home. The home is well maintained, with any issues being promptly addressed to ensure a safe and pleasant living environment.

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

Children's needs are known and well understood by the registered manager and staff team. Children's plans are clear, with detailed guidance for staff to follow. Children are actively involved in the creation of their care plans. Children are encouraged to attend multi-agency meetings about their care to share their views and wishes about the care that they receive.

Before children move into the home, the registered manager conducts a thorough risk assessment to identify any known risks and to assess the level of support required to meet children's needs. This assessment carefully considers the skills and experience of the staff to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide individualised care. The manager also consults with the child's placing authority and external professionals to gather relevant information, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the child's needs. The registered manager considers the impact on the children already living in the home. As a result, moves into the home are thoughtfully carried out and all considerations are thoroughly evaluated to ensure that the child's transition into the home is safe and appropriate.

Consequences and rewards are used consistently in the home to promote and celebrate positive behaviours and achievements. Children are regularly consulted about rewards and incentives and are involved in developing their own goals to work to. Consequences are used infrequently, but when imposed, they are appropriate to the behaviour displayed. On one occasion, staff have physically held a child as a last resort to prevent harm to themselves or others.

On the rare occasions that children go missing from home, staff are proactive and professionally curious in their efforts to locate and safely return the children. Practice is supported by detailed written information about the children from the placing authority. Clear and comprehensive safety plans are in place, which provide staff with clear guidance on the steps they need to take. This ensures a quick and effective

response. Staff speak to children to understand the reasons why children go missing from the home in an attempt to reduce the risk of future incidents.

The registered manager ensures that staff are recruited safely and that they receive a detailed, quality induction into the home. Staff monitor visitors to the home, further ensuring the protection of children from potential harm.

There have been two occasions where children have displayed self-injurious behaviours. On both occasions, staff responded quickly and appropriately, removing any items that children could potentially use to harm themselves, ensuring their immediate safety. Staff are vigilant and conduct searches of children's bedrooms when concerns arise. However, on one occasion consent for room search was not discussed with the child or consent sought. This limits staff's transparency and children's understanding of the process.

Risks to children are known and understood by staff. Children's individual risk assessments are detailed and have clear guidance for staff to follow. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding practices and are proactive in sharing relevant information with external professionals in a timely manner. However, for one incident involving substance misuse, records do not fully evidence the actions taken by staff to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is an inspirational, confident and ambitious leader who knows the children very well and has a good understanding of their individual needs. She sets high expectations for both herself and her staff, demonstrating a strong passion for the children's progress and achievements. She is supported by a highly skilled deputy manager; they work together closely to create a positive and welcoming culture within the home. They lead by example, role modelling good practice to continually improve the quality of care provided to children. Their leadership creates an environment where staff are motivated and children's needs are consistently prioritised.

Staff are positive about their experience of working in the home and say that they 'love' coming to work. Staff say that they feel well supported by the registered manager and describe her as approachable and always available to provide advice and guidance. Staff say that they feel valued and appreciated in their roles. The home is described by staff as 'like a family' where there is a strong sense of teamwork and supportive relationships.

There is excellent multi-agency working in place with strong collaboration between staff, external professionals and family members. Partner agencies and family members say that they are happy with the care provided to children by staff, highlighting the positive impact the home has on children's well-being. The registered manager is a strong advocate for children. She shares relevant information in a timely manner with both professionals and family members, escalating her concerns when she feels children's needs are not being met. One social worker said, 'It's been

absolutely brilliant. I get excellent communication from staff; the manager is an excellent advocate for [name of child]. Staff have absolutely gone above and beyond for [name of child], they don't give up.'

The registered manager has a proactive approach and ensures that all plans used to manage and mitigate risk are regularly reviewed and updated. She undertakes regular reviews of children's progress and considers any patterns or themes. She understands the home's strengths and areas for development. Any shortfalls in staff practice are identified and appropriately addressed by the registered manager.

Staff development is a priority. There is a wide range of training that staff attend, including courses that are specific to the children's individual needs. The registered manager arranges for children's specialist services to attend team meetings and provide additional bespoke training for staff. The registered manager completes development sessions with staff individually and in monthly team meetings to improve the quality of care provided to children. Staff have lots of opportunities to discuss and reflect on their care of the children. However, a small number of staff have not received one-to-one supervision regularly while working in the home.

Most serious incidents are appropriately notified to Ofsted in a timely manner. However, on one occasion, there was a significant delay in notifying the regulator. This means that on this occasion, Ofsted is unable to scrutinise information to ensure that children are kept safe.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
If there is a referral of a person working in the home pursuant to section 35 (Regulated activity providers: duty to refer) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006(1), the registered person must without delay notify— HMCI; the placing authority; and each other relevant person. The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of—	23 May 2025

the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (3)(a)(b)(c) (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the child's bedroom should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2806882

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Stopford House, 3rd Floor, Piccadilly, Stockport SK1 3UR

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Vetcher

Registered manager: Alice Bodley

Inspector

Leanne Carr, Social Care Inspector

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