

SC008490

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and managed.

The manager is registered and is an inspirational and ambitious leader.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 September 2018

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 **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/07/2017	Full	Good
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/07/2016	Full	Good
11/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that relevant plans are in place for young people ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.1). This relates specifically to obtaining a pathway plan and updated care plans for those young people who require them.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Care planning is completed extremely well and practice is highly individualised to meet the specific needs of the young people at the home. Young people make considerable progress in relation to their starting points. They benefit from effective, high-quality support from staff that contributes to change and improvement in their lives.

Young people enjoy living at the home. They are kept safe and develop a strong sense of personal safety. They benefit from warm and secure relationships with staff, and have stability and consistency in their lives. The home provides young people with a caring, supportive and nurturing environment. Appropriate boundaries are implemented by staff to promote young people's safety, well-being and positive behaviour.

A social worker reported:

He's had a few placements where he's struggled. Here, he's engaged with school and engaged with therapy. He seems quite settled. They really are lovely with him. Generally, I am happy with how he's doing. The staff are very nurturing, but there are also boundaries. They've really met his needs.

Relevant care plans are in place to meet the specific needs of the young people. However, some young people require more up-to-date plans that take account of their changing needs and circumstances. For example, one young person requires a pathway plan to promote their readiness for independence.

Staff have unconditional positive regard and consistently high aspirations for young people. They involve them in care planning and all aspects of daily living. Young people are supported to express themselves as individuals and staff act on their reasonable requests. Consequently, young people can influence and make a positive contribution to the running of their home.

Young people attend school on a regular basis, with good support and encouragement from staff. School leavers are supported to further their education to help them achieve their career aspirations, training and vocational goals. Staff maintain effective

partnerships with the providers of young people's education to promote their educational achievement, continuing progress and learning.

Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and there are good arrangements to meet their specific health needs. Young people have access to the health services they need, including therapeutic support to promote their physical and emotional well-being. Medical consent is in place and staff are clear about the types of health decisions and responsibilities that are charged and delegated to them.

Young people reported:

I enjoy living here. It's a good place. They take your feelings into consideration and try to understand what's wrong. They help you as much as they can. I get a lot of support.

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

There is zero tolerance for bullying and staff have high expectations of behaviour. Staff promote harmonious relationships and maintain a safe environment for young people. Positive behaviour is praised and negative behaviour is addressed and challenged appropriately. Restraint is a last resort that is only ever used by trained and competent staff to protect young people from harm.

Sanctions used by staff are fair and proportionate. Young people are supported to learn from their wrongdoing and staff encourage their positive behaviour. The behaviours of young people are managed safely and effectively by staff.

Young people become increasingly safe because of the actions staff take to support and protect them. Staff have a good understanding of their specific needs and emerging vulnerabilities, and take appropriate action to address them. Risks associated with young people are well known and these risks are managed effectively by staff.

The home maintains highly effective partnerships with the police to locate young people on the rare occasions that they go missing. Staff actively look for young people and work closely with the police and each other to locate young people promptly and secure their safe return. Young people's safety is consistently at the centre of the staff's practice.

Allegations of abuse are managed professionally, which ensures that young people are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding practice. They ensure that serious incidents are shared with the appropriate safeguarding agencies to help keep young people safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed efficiently and effectively, and staff are well managed, supported

and led. The registered manager is an inspirational and ambitious leader. She is well qualified, highly experienced and professionally competent. The registered manager has a degree in psychology and an appropriate qualification in leadership and management. She demonstrates strong and effective leadership of the day-to-day operations of the home.

The registered manager has consistently high expectations of staff and high aspirations for all young people. Senior staff ensure that staff share and implement the home's ethos, approach and philosophy in caring for young people. Staff work well together as a team. The manager stimulates their enthusiasm and channels their efforts effectively.

Young people benefit from well-qualified, trained and experienced staff who make a positive difference to their lives, and meet the aims and objectives as set out in the home's statement of purpose. Health and safety arrangements are managed effectively. This ensures that a safe, warm, comfortable and homely environment is consistently maintained for the young people.

The home maintains highly effective partnerships with all professional agencies to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help and wraparound support. This includes challenging those that fail to meet their obligations and deliver the services and support that young people need to thrive and make good progress in their lives.

The registered manager will escalate concerns and challenge professional decisions, if she believes this to be in the best interests of young people. The manager is an effective advocate for young people who champions their needs effectively, with authority and great enthusiasm.

The registered manager has an exceptionally good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and makes good use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to secure continuing improvement. She ensures that staff benefit from regular, high-quality, practice-related supervision and training. This ensures that staff are well supported and have their training and developmental needs identified and met.

The manager creates a culture of openness, positivity and enthusiasm. She delegates tasks and empowers staff to work confidently and competently with young people with a clear sense of purpose and direction.

The home is visited each month by an independent professional who scrutinises the performance of the home and the arrangements made to safeguard young people and promote their well-being. The manager completes a detailed and evaluative quality of care review. This ensures that she has an in-depth understanding of the progress young people make, and enables her to identify and address any emerging concerns, patterns or trends.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC008490

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, 2nd Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Sylvia Eboigbe

Registered manager: Claire Brady

Inspector

Anthony Kyem: social care inspector

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