

SC008575

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a charitable organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities and/or sensory impairment. The home provides short-term breaks. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2016.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 January 2019

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

Date of last inspection: 29 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/11/2017	Full	Good
27/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/08/2016	Full	Good
22/03/2016	Interim	Not judged

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

Recommendations

- Staff should have the skills and confidence to communicate easily and understand the importance of listening to, involving and responding to the children they care for. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10) In particular, staff would benefit from training to improve their skills and understanding in using communication aids for individual children.
- For some children who have experienced severe trauma, have mental health difficulties or have been excluded or out of education for significant periods, it may be necessary to address and work through their past experiences and present needs before they can positively participate in learning activities and formal education. Staff in children's homes will play a key role in supporting these children in line with their personal education plan or EHC plan and recommendations from education and health professionals. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.3)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5) In particular, ensure that any mould is cleaned off the bedroom window frame and the sealant in the wet room.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people make excellent progress from their starting points in the home. Professionals and parents are extremely complimentary about the quality of care that the home provides to children and young people. There are positive relationships between staff and children and young people. From their starting points, children and young people make very good progress and enjoy a variety of experiences and activities. A professional said, 'I'm so impressed with the placement, [name] is a different person, he has matured and grown, he has aspirations for the future. The staff are very caring and committed.'

One young person currently lives at the home and, in the main, they engage well with those children and young people who come to stay on short breaks. Staff carefully plan children and young people's stays. Staff contact parents prior to their child's stay to discuss any changes to their child's care needs. This ensures that the needs of each child and young person are well met.

Children and young people's complex health needs are effectively managed. Staff work well with parents and health professionals to ensure that children and young people's health needs are met. For example, the home is currently working with a speech and language therapist to develop communication passports for each child and young person.

Education and healthcare remain the responsibility of parents or carers, except for the young person living at the home. Prior to living at the home, the young person had missed a large amount of education due to ill health. At the last inspection, the registered manager was working with education professionals to identify a suitable education provision, but this has proved challenging. Funding has recently been agreed for a placement at one of the organisation's education provisions.

Staff encourage the children and young people to contribute their views and opinions, dependent on each of their communication styles and ability. For example, some children use a pictorial exchange system that they use in school, 'now and next boards', or objects of reference to help them communicate. One young person uses a Dynavox communicator. Staff would benefit from some training in operating this device.

The home provides a nurturing and stimulating environment for children and young people who have a range of disabilities. Redecoration has been carried out and extra space has been created in the sensory room. Children and young people benefit from a clean, tidy and well-furnished home. However, it would be beneficial to replace the sealant in the wet room due to the mould. Furthermore, one of the bedrooms has a small amount of mould on the window frame.

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

Staff undertake safeguarding training and demonstrate a good understanding of the organisation's safeguarding procedures. There has been one complaint since the last inspection. The home responded to this effectively and this been resolved. Parents and professionals spoken with confirm that children and young people are protected and safe in the home.

Children and young people receive a high level of support and supervision. There have been no incidents of children or young people going missing from the home. Comprehensive care plans and risk assessments identify the risk associated with children and young people's complex needs and vulnerabilities. Personal care needs are managed with sensitivity to ensure that children and young people's privacy and dignity is well maintained.

Staff are well trained in a nationally recognised programme that enables them to understand and support children and young people's behaviour. Staff are skilled at using redirection or reassurance to help children stay calm. This means that the use of physical intervention is kept to a minimum. A parent said, 'His behaviour has improved, he is learning to empathise, and has learned to respect the staff, which is huge for him. They have worked at his pace and this has always been needed.'

Records confirm that complaints and concerns are investigated, and appropriate action is taken to promote children and young people's welfare and safety.

All staff are checked and vetted as part of the provider's recruitment procedures. These measures prevent unsuitable people from being recruited who may pose a risk to children and young people. Staff ensure that visitors provide identification before entering the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The manager and her assistant are suitably qualified and experienced. Together, they are committed to delivering high-quality care to children and young people. They act as positive role models and have high expectations about what the children and young people can achieve.

Staff confirm that they are provided with excellent training and development opportunities and receive very good support and supervision. This ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the children and young people.

The home is well staffed to meet the needs of the children and young people. The majority of staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Staff have delegated responsibilities, for example medication and communication measures. Consequently, staff morale is high and this shared approach ensures that children and young people remain at the centre of staff practice.

The home is well resourced and is achieving its aims and objectives as set out in the statement of purpose. The manager uses both internal and external monitoring to ensure that the high standards of care are maintained. The requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection have all been met.

The home has strong working relationships with partner agencies and families. Feedback from parents and professionals about the quality of care and the difference the home is making to children and young people is overwhelmingly positive. A professional commented, 'I'm so impressed with the placement. They [staff] are very caring and committed, they have gone over and above.' A parent said, 'I have the utmost confidence in them, [name] comes back very happy. They know her well and respond to her well. Without exception all the staff are excellent.' Another professional said, '[name of the home] is the best. The staff are so good at what they do. They are very adaptable at supporting the needs of parents. All the children I have there are doing very well.'

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: SC008575

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Registered provider address: Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1JE

Responsible individual: Jill Sheldrake

Registered manager: Helen Marston

Inspector

Michelle Bacon, social care inspector

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