

SC025713

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run and managed by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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 who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 16 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/10/2019	Full	Good
19/12/2018	Full	Good
27/09/2017	Full	Good
24/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

From individual starting points, all children make significant progress. As a result, children's outcomes improve considerably.

Staff have extensive knowledge, skills and experience. They develop strong and warm relationships with children. They are resilient and support children to overcome trauma and abuse. One child said: 'I love it here; it's not like a care home, staff are like a family to me. The staff here have brought me up.' These trusting relationships enable children to flourish.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff went to exceptional lengths to care for children. Staff moved into the home. They put up a marquee in the garden to ensure that families could come and see their children safely. When schools were closed, staff arranged a school prom to ensure that children were able to celebrate their end of year. Children thrived, despite the COVID-19 restrictions.

From admission to the home, children are supported to attend school and as a result their educational attendance and progress are exceptional. When children struggle with education, staff are creative in supporting children to re-engage.

The members of the staff team are passionate about promoting the rights of the children in their care. The home has an ethos of empowering the children.

The manager ensures that equality and diversity issues are embedded throughout the home's care and placement planning. Identity needs are understood by staff and children are supported effectively. Children are taught to embrace and accept diversity and learn about the world around them.

Stakeholders are impressed with the standards of care and commitment to improving children's experience and progress. One social worker said: 'I think they are brilliant. No job has been too big.' All professionals were unanimous in their praise for this home.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. Staff manage a range of complex safeguarding behaviours effectively. Managers rigorously review safeguarding incidents. This ensures that safeguarding practice is robust.

From the point of admission, risks are well understood. Staff put in place clear strategies to manage risk. While risk reduction for children is not linear from their starting points, risks have significantly reduced. When risks reduce, children gain a

higher level of independence. This is a great motivator for children to keep themselves safe.

Behaviour management is excellent and children are not restrained. Theory-based approaches underpin how the staff manage children's behaviour. Staff understand the impact of early life trauma on children. Staff manage children's individual behaviours exceptionally well. This enables staff to de-escalate difficult situations and support children effectively to manage their own behaviour.

On the rare occasions when children go missing from home, they experience well-coordinated responses from staff. This is effective in reducing the actual, or risk of, harm to them. Social workers confirm that safeguarding situations, including incidents of going missing, are well managed.

Staff have excellent safeguarding knowledge. They benefit from a comprehensive training programme. Staff understand, and can respond well to, a range of complex issues, including self-harm and child sexual exploitation.

Safeguarding practice shows strong partnership working. This means children benefit from a wraparound approach to keeping them safe. Allegations are managed in line with procedures and show robust safeguarding practice.

The registered manager attends local safeguarding meetings. The home has a locality risk assessment, but this does not include the views of stakeholders. Consultation is necessary to capture all known locality risks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leadership and management arrangements are exceptional. The home is led by a highly motivated management team. Internal and external quality assurance processes drive continual improvement. Managers and staff are aspirational for the children to ensure that they fulfil their individual potential.

The registered manager ensures that staff provide consistent standards of outstanding care. Managers promote the professional development of all staff. Staff benefit from high standards of support and monitoring. This enables the team to provide high-calibre, bespoke care for children with a diverse range of complex needs.

The home is a happy work environment. Staff are passionate about their roles. They have a shared commitment to ensuring that children benefit from the highest standards of care. One member of staff said: 'It's an absolutely amazing place to work. I consider I have the best job in the world.'

Strong partnership working with partner agencies, such as placing authorities and health professionals, promotes children's capacity to develop and thrive. A social worker said: 'This home has excellent management and staff work hard to ensure

that children's needs are met.' A safeguarding professional said: 'The excellent staff team and fantastic leadership has enabled this child to progress towards their goals.'

Managers go to exceptional lengths to listen to the wishes and feelings of children. This empowers children and builds self-confidence. This has led to one child working with the clinical psychologist and helping to deliver self-harm training to the staff team.

The home environment conveys to children that they are valued. The registered manager said: 'We provide a home for children, rather than a children's home.' The home is maintained to high standards. The interior and exterior provide space for play, privacy and group activities. Children are proud of their home.

The registered manager works tirelessly to provide the best possible care for children. She actively works on behalf of children's rights, both at a local and national level. She advocates on behalf of children and challenges decisions which are not in the child's best interests.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should include in their review of the suitability of the location and premises of the home any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: SC025713

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Registered provider address: The Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, SK8 1JE

Responsible individual: Jill Sheldrake

Registered manager: Deborah Hinett

Inspector

Amanda Ellis, Social Care Inspector

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