

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 operated by a charity. It offers care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have learning disabilities.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2018.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 November 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: 25 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/09/2024	Full	Good
20/02/2024	Full	Good
10/01/2023	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The inspector spoke with all children about their experiences.

Two children have lived in the home for several years. One child moved into the home more recently. Before the child moved in, managers visited them in their previous home. They spoke with professionals and family members to learn about the child's complex needs. The needs and views of children already living in the home were considered. This supports children to live together safely.

Children enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff spend time with children and help them develop their individual interests. This includes supporting children to attend youth organisations and a local football club. Children also enjoy holidays together, which supports positive relationships in the home.

Children spend time with people who are important to them. Managers and staff recognise the importance of maintaining family relationships. Managers advocate for children to spend increasing lengths of time with family members when this supports their care plan.

Children's health needs are known and understood by staff. Staff encourage children to attend routine health appointments. Specialist support is accessed when this is necessary. Staff provide healthy meals and encourage children to participate in physical activities. This supports children in maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Children's education is a priority for managers and staff. When children experience challenges in accessing education, managers communicate regularly with key professionals and advocate for children in their best interests. This ensures that education remains a shared priority.

Children live in a comfortable home that has a family feel. Photos of children are displayed throughout the home. Children's bedrooms are personalised according to their individual tastes. However, assessments to consider the use of bedroom door alarms are not individualised for each child.

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

Risk assessments and support plans set out children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. They provide clear guidance to staff about how children need to be supported. Staff follow these plans and de-escalate incidents in the home effectively.

Allegations are treated seriously and investigated thoroughly. Safeguarding professionals are informed. Children and staff are supported effectively and informed about the outcome in a timely manner. This ensures that children feel heard.

Children rarely go missing from home. On occasions when children are missing, staff look for them and communicate with family members and professionals. Children are welcomed back to the home sensitively. They are offered opportunities to speak to an independent person about their reasons for not returning home.

Children are rarely held to keep them safe. When this is necessary, the least restrictive intervention is used. However, on one occasion, managers failed to ensure that the child was spoken to about the intervention by someone not involved in the incident. On another occasion, managers did not speak to staff about the intervention. This limits children's opportunities to talk about their feelings and for staff to learn from interventions.

Staff provide clear and consistent boundaries for children. Weekly planners and reward charts help children understand what is expected of them. Consequences are used to help children understand cause and effect. Managers review and evaluate consequences that are implemented by staff to ensure that they are proportionate and effective.

Recruitment practices are robust and ensure that only suitable adults work with children. Agency staff are rarely used. When necessary, managers ensure that the appropriate checks are carried out.

Arrangements for the administration of medication are safe. When shortfalls in the recording of medication are identified, managers take prompt and effective action to ensure that practice is improved.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a qualified and experienced manager. She is child focused and has high aspirations for children. Her approach to caring for children is based on building trusting, nurturing relationships. This approach is embedded in staff practice.

Managers are aware of the home's strengths and areas for development. Effective systems are in place to allow managers to have oversight of the work the staff carry out with children. Any shortfalls in staff practice are identified quickly and addressed appropriately. However, on one occasion, managers did not submit a notification of a serious incident to Ofsted. This reduces the level of external oversight to ensure that children are safe and well cared for.

Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended. They are used as a forum to share important information about children and key messages about how they need to be cared for. The in-house therapist attends team meetings to help staff understand and respond to children's needs.

Staff say they feel supported by managers. Managers provide regular, reflective supervision. However, records of supervision lack detail, and actions do not always include timescales.

Feedback from children, family members and external agencies is valued. Children are regularly consulted, and their views are responded to. Professionals say that the registered manager is a strong advocate for children and that children are provided with consistent care that helps them make progress.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) 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(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(c)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that a person who was not involved in the intervention speaks to the staff and children after a child is held.	31 December 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	31 December 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any decision to use bedroom door alarms is informed by a rigorous assessment of the individual children's needs, be properly recorded, and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that records of supervision are of good quality and actions are clearly documented, along with timescales for completion. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

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: SC025713

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Together Trust

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

Responsible individual: Sara Aldridge

Registered manager: Deborah Hinett

Inspector

Anna Belshaw, Social Care Inspector

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