

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 registered to provide care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The home is privately owned and managed.

At the time of the inspection, there were two children living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2021.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 September 2024

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: 20 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2024	Full	Good
10/01/2023	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
16/10/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a homely environment. There are photos of the children and mementos of important occasions. Damage to the home is quickly acted upon. Although the home requires some improvements, staff have been creative in ensuring that the home remains welcoming for the children. The manager has a plan for the required maintenance.

Staff actively support children to enjoy and achieve. Children have gone from not accessing any activities independently to regularly attending clubs of interest. One child takes great pride in wearing an activity club uniform and has plans to follow this as a career pathway. This allows children's self-esteem and confidence to flourish.

Therapeutic approaches are embedded in staff practice. Staff look beyond a child's behaviours, recognising the impact of past trauma. Staff care for the children in a kind, nurturing and empathic way.

Children are at different points in their educational attainment. Staff understand the value of education and work in partnership with agencies to support children to achieve. The manager is a strong advocate who escalates her concerns when children are not receiving the quality of education they deserve. This enables children to reach their potential.

Staff support children to see their families and those who are important to them. This is in line with their individual plans. Staff understand that seeing family members can sometimes be difficult for children. Staff help children to safely express their emotions and talk through their feelings.

Children are registered with local health services and have regular routine check-ups. Staff recognise that children's experiences can impact their relationship with food. Staff encourage children to maintain healthy lifestyles. However, this needs a consistent approach so that children are not impacted negatively and become fixated on exercise and food.

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

Staff take the appropriate action to locate children when they go missing from the home. They follow the children, search local areas, and contact parents and all relevant agencies. Children are given a nurturing welcome on their return. Children also get the opportunity to speak to someone independent of the home about why they went missing and what happened while they were missing. Individual work is carried out to help the children to make safer choices.

Leaders and managers take allegations seriously and complete thorough investigations. Children are kept informed throughout the process, including receiving an explanation of the outcome. Any learning identified is shared with staff. Children feel listened to and valued.

Children have been physically held by staff to protect them from harm. Staff understand the importance of only using physical intervention as a last resort. Records of interventions are detailed and contain the relevant information. The manager ensures that children are spoken with. This enables staff and the child to understand their experiences. Staff have suitable debriefs and opportunities to reflect. This helps protect children's relationships with the staff caring for them.

Children said that they feel safe and happy. Two children have been living in the home for a number of years, and this is testament to how secure they feel. Children's voices are heard, and they are able to express their worries and the impact these worries have on them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced and dedicated manager. She is motivated and committed to keeping the children's individual needs central in all decisions. This is an ethos shared throughout the staff team. The manager leads by example and staff feel fully supported and motivated.

The manager had to make a difficult decision in ending one child's placement. This was done with sensitivity and took into consideration the best interests of all the children. The child's transition planning allowed for a positive move. The manager is focused on having a period of stability for the children and the staff before considering another child moving into the home.

Leaders and managers have effective oversight of all aspects of care. Managers identify areas for development and provide staff with guidance. Currently, managers are supporting staff to improve consistency through individual skills development plans.

The manager applies internal and external monitoring systems to promote continued improvement. However, the scrutiny from external sources is variable in quality, as it fails to include the views of external stakeholders and children. This fails to ensure a critical analysis about the quality of care.

Supervisions and team meetings are regular and of good quality. They provide plenty of opportunities for staff to reflect on their work with the children and share good examples to promote learning. This helps to ensure that everyone caring for the children has a consistent approach. This means that the children have clear boundaries and that they feel secure.

Feedback from other professionals and families is exceptional. The manager understands the importance of building and maintaining these relationships and the positive impact this has on the children. One professional said, 'The communication we received was excellent and I feel this allowed us all to be on the same page and was an excellent example of multi-agency working to attempt to keep [name of child] safe.'

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should make best use of internal and external monitoring systems to secure continuous improvement. This relates specifically to ensuring that there is independent scrutiny which includes contribution and participation from children, stakeholders and family members to enable critical analysis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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

Angeline Clarke, Social Care Inspector

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