

# SC025744

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately operated home provides care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home was registered with Ofsted in 1994 and the manager registered in June 2015.

Four children were living in the home at the time of this inspection.

### Inspection dates: 12 and 13 November 2024

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 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 and young people who need help, protection, and care.

**Date of last inspection:** 13 February 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 13/02/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 28/02/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 02/03/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 24/04/2019      | Full            | Outstanding          |

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

The quality of care and support provided to the children is outstanding. Each child, from their starting point, is making exceptional progress in many areas. This progress is because staff thoroughly understand the children's needs and work passionately and creatively to support them.

The children's wishes and views remain a priority for the staff team. Children are confident to talk to staff about any concerns. This has allowed one child to develop the skills and confidence in sharing their views and making a complaint to their placing authority.

Staff proactively carry out direct work with the children. Records of individual sessions demonstrate meaningful conversations relevant to the children's individual needs. Through these trusting relationships, children are actively involved in any meetings that influence their care planning.

Educational progress is exceptional. Staff go above and beyond to ensure that children are in their agreed schools despite the travelling logistics. For one child, this has meant within a short period of time they have progressed from non-school attendance to a full timetable and have clear aspirations for both their short- and longer-term goals.

Staff demonstrate versatility in ensuring the children explore and enjoy a range of stimulating activities and experiences both within and outside the home. For some children, this includes having opportunities to have quality family time baking with their parent and pumpkin picking. For others, this includes adventurous walks in places of beauty.

Management's commitment to ensuring children develop and maintain long-lasting relationships with their families is inspirational. Staff work imaginatively to support quality time for children and their families. Family members are welcomed into the home where possible. For one family this included Christmas, which has enabled children to have lasting memories. As a result of this, children's emotional well-being and self-esteem have significantly improved.

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

Children are safe, feel safe and are taught to keep themselves safe. There have been no safeguarding incidents in the home since the last inspection; this is because safeguarding children is of principal importance.

Risk assessment is of the highest calibre. Children's risks are comprehensively understood from their admission to the home. Risk assessments provide clarity to staff and are used to formulate individual behaviour support plans. Risks are reviewed and

strategies to protect children adapted. Over time, risks reduce for children. This means they gain a higher level of independence.

Managers have had to make the difficult decision to end one child's placement. This decision took into consideration all of the children's immediate safety. While this impacted the team greatly, they were able to acknowledge that they could no longer keep the child safe. Managers and staff worked diligently to allow for a positive transition. The child maintains a degree of contact with the staff team, which shows the trusting relationships that had been formed.

The care afforded to children is reinforced by a therapeutic framework which has a strong emphasis on nurture and care. The consistency of this approach enables children to work through their feelings with support from the people caring for them. This has resulted in there being no physical interventions, no room searches and very few consequences. Staff's use of positive behaviour management has been highly effective in developing the children's sense of self and their ability to express their emotions safely.

Children are rarely missing from the home and incidents of children going missing have significantly reduced. On the occasions when children have been missing from home, the staff responses were highly effective. For one child, this was an isolated incident. Staff reassurance and support have meant that the child feels safe and has built trusting relationships. However, on one occasion, despite meaningful work being undertaken with the child to reduce potential risk, an incident record did not fully capture learning from an incident.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

There is a wealth of experience within the management team, and its members are fully established in their roles. The registered manager works closely with the assistant manager to create a culture of high ambition and passion for the children in their care which is echoed throughout the staff team, whose members are proud to be part of the home.

Staff bring a range of skills and knowledge to the home. Staff work creatively and embrace each other's strengths to ensure the children's needs are holistically met.

The support offered to staff is exceptional, and as a result staff morale is high and staff are happy in their workplace. It is rare that additional staffing support is required and if so, bank staff are used who are known to the children. Staff describe themselves as a family and this provides the children with continuity of care. One child expressed to staff that while they want to be with their family on Christmas Day, they equally want time in the home.

Managers and staff are dedicated to nurturing solid working relationships with stakeholders. This enables a comprehensive approach in meeting children's individual needs. Feedback from professionals and family is excellent. One independent reviewing

officer said: 'In my professional opinion, I would say this is an outstanding home. They are absolutely fantastic!'

The manager has a strong focus on staff learning and developing a confident skill base. Supervision sessions, annual appraisals and team meetings are used to support staff development. This is further enhanced through specific training in line with children's unique needs. All of the team members contribute to the smooth running of the home.

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

### **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure consistently that when children have been missing from home, evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills, or knowledge for staff, or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 46, paragraph 9.31)

### **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:** SC025744

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** The Together Trust

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

**Responsible individual:** Jill Sheldrake

**Registered manager:** Stephen Truelove

## Inspector

Angeline Clarke, Social Care Inspector

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