

SC025744

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a charity. It offers care for up to six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2015.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home. Both children spoke with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

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

Date of last inspection: 12 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/11/2024	Full	Outstanding
13/02/2024	Full	Good
28/02/2023	Full	Good
02/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, two children have moved on from the home. Managers and staff worked hard to support the children to return to the care of their family, building positive relationships with parents throughout the process. Professionals report that this collaborative approach helped enable the children's successful return home.

Two children have lived in the home for over a year. Children enjoy trusting relationships with staff and say that they can talk to staff about any worries they may have. Staff understand children's previous experiences and records demonstrate nurturing, sensitive interactions. Children have positive experiences that create lasting childhood memories. This includes holidays in the UK and abroad.

Children's education is a priority for managers and staff. Since the last inspection, one child has completed their GCSE exams and progressed to a college course. Another child experienced a period of good attendance, although their education placements could not be sustained. Staff continue to support children to maintain positive routines and engage in educational activities within the home, including helping them explore employment opportunities. Managers and staff work proactively with external professionals and advocate strongly for children to return to education at the earliest opportunity.

Children are supported to develop their independence skills. Staff prepare individual independence plans that focus on specific areas of development. For one child this includes completing their own laundry and household cleanliness tasks. Children are rewarded when they complete identified tasks.

Children spend time with people who are important to them. Staff support these arrangements and facilitate time with family members and friends in the community and in the home. Children enjoy activities with brothers and sisters. When children spend time with friends in the community, staff check in with them to make sure that they are safe.

The home is clean, nicely decorated and well maintained. Photos of children and certificates of their achievements are displayed. Children's bedrooms are decorated to their individual tastes and are well furnished.

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

Children are effectively safeguarded. Staff understand children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. Assessments and plans are updated regularly and set out clear actions for staff to take if risks increase. Staff follow these plans and respond promptly to any safeguarding concerns.

Risks in relation to one child going missing from home are understood by staff. When the child is missing managers and staff are responsive. Staff visit areas the child is known to socialise and maintain communication with them. Staff have developed relationships with the child's peers and their family members. Managers ensure that the child is offered an independent return home interview.

Staff understand the risks in relation to self-harm for one child. Managers and staff recognise when the child is experiencing low mood. They respond proactively and with care. When incidents of self-harm occur, staff respond sensitively. Medical attention is sought when this is necessary. Specialist help is made available to the child.

Children benefit from strength based, child centred key work sessions that focus on issues affecting them. This includes discussion about friendships, substance misuse and online safety. These conversations have led to risks for each child reducing.

Staff search children's bedrooms when there are concerns for their safety. The reason for the search is clearly recorded. However, records do not consistently evidence that children's permission is sought, or that they are informed about the room search taking place.

Managers and staff effectively represent children's views and act as advocates in their best interests. Staff encourage children to access the support of an independent advocate. One professional said, 'staff listen to the child and what they want. They represent their views and advocate well for them.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is experienced and knowledgeable. He is supported by a strong deputy and together they provide effective, child-focussed leadership to staff. Managers have a visible presence in the home and know the children well. Staff say that they value the support that managers provide.

Children are cared for by an experienced, consistent staff team. Managers have high expectations about the quality-of-care children receive and this is provided by staff. Case records reflect the nurturing work that is undertaken with children. Children are encouraged to read and contribute to their plans. Records reflect a consistently caring and supportive approach.

Managers have effective systems in place to monitor the quality-of-care children receive. Regular audits and monthly progress reports support managers to track the work staff are completing and the progress children make. Feedback from children, parents and professionals is valued and responded to.

New staff receive a thorough induction and are helped to develop their skills. Staff receive regular reflective supervision that focuses on children's needs. Detailed records are kept and actions are clearly identified. Staff also benefit from development

opportunities and annual appraisals. Feedback from children and colleagues is included within the appraisal process.

Children benefit from effective communication between staff and there is a strong teamwork ethos. This is enhanced by regular team meetings that focus on children's progress, risks and vulnerabilities. There is a strong sense of shared ownership about how the home operates. One member of staff said, 'we have good relationships with each other. Everyone has their own skills and strengths. This is the best home I've worked at.'

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that room search records clearly demonstrate whether the child has been asked for their permission, or informed that a room search has taken place. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)

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, Cheshire SK8 1JE

Responsible individual: Sara Aldridge

Registered manager: Stephen Truelove

Inspector

Anna Belshaw, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026