

SC028868

Registered provider: Step-A-Side Company Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider and is registered to offer care for up to four children. At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

A suitably qualified registered manager oversees the home.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 October 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: 15 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/12/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/08/2021	Full	Good
06/08/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress in this home and value to adults who look after them. Dedicated and caring staff take time to build trusting relationships with the children. Children are supported to speak about a range of sensitive issues. Secure relationships with staff help the children to explore their feelings, which helps them to better understand their emotions and behaviours.

Staff understand the importance of education and support children to attend school. Leaders and managers strongly advocate for children to receive their educational entitlement and challenge the wider network when there are gaps. Staff provide a range of recreational opportunities for children to compliment their education. Children are encouraged to pursue their interests and staff give support with creative projects and activities around the home.

The children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and are involved in creating healthy routines. Shopping and cooking are shared tasks and the children are supported with learning how to shop and cook healthy meals. Staff understand the importance of sleep and personal hygiene and children are appropriately supported with these routines. Staff developed a carefully thought-out plan to support one child to stop smoking and vaping, which has had positive impact on the child's health.

The home environment is warm and homely with several shared spaces for eating together, relaxing and games. The children's bedrooms are personalised to their tastes. Memory books are created for each child and photos of special occasions, events and people are kept for them to look back on.

Staff are committed to ensuring that children enjoy regular, meaningful time with their family. Staff have built trusting relationships with family members, which has helped to develop a consistent network of trusted adults around the children. One parent talked about the progress their child is making and the 'detailed, regular' communication and support they receive from staff.

Although there are some good, individual pieces of work taking place, plans to support children with their independence are not clear. This could result in uncertainty for children as they approach adulthood.

Leaders and managers are beginning to understand children's cultural needs, but there are some gaps in knowledge about wider issues of diversity which is impacting on one child.

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

Safeguarding concerns are well managed, with robust action and timely action taken to address issues. Children do not go missing from this home. Plans to support staff to minimise risk for the children are clear and concise.

Concerns about staff practice and most complaints are responded to in a timely manner and thoroughly investigated. The children and individuals involved are supported throughout and the outcome is clearly communicated.

An age-proportionate approach is taken in relation to monitoring mobile phones and internet use. Children agree to a contract with staff about the ways in which their phones and internet use are monitored for safeguarding reasons. Staff have open conversations with the children about any concerns and there is an educative approach taken.

Staff support children to take age-appropriate risks as part of their development and learn skills to help keep themselves safe. Children enjoy spending meaningful time with their friends and family in the community without any unnecessary restrictions.

There have been two medication errors, which leaders and managers have thoroughly investigated to inform staff learning. Procedures have been reviewed and refresher training has been undertaken.

Staff use a variety of de-escalation techniques to support children who are experiencing distress. Staff use the positive relationships they have with the children to intervene and minimise risk during periods of conflict. Restraint is used as a last resort and, as a result, there have only been two incidents. Records are clearly written with management oversight, but lack reflection on practice.

Staff support the children to have positive relationships with one another. However, some negative interactions and behaviours have not been challenged and more needs to be done to address this as a wider issue within the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced and passionate manager who has a good understanding of the children's needs. The manager strongly advocates for the children and provides good challenge to the wider network when there are gaps in planning or services.

Leaders and managers understand the importance of building relationships with children's families and the multi-agency network. Professional feedback is positive about staff, the care of the children and the progress they are making.

Leaders and managers respond to children's views in a number of ways and children are involved in decision-making in the home. Children know who to speak to if they are unhappy or wish to make a complaint. All of the children have access to independent advocacy.

Leaders and managers ensure that there are enough staff to care for the children, and agency staff are not used. Staff know the children well and demonstrate commitment and compassion in their roles. Several members of staff talked about the home's ethos of 'happy, healthy, loved and ready' and how this is an important message for the children. Staff speak positively about the support of leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are up to date with mandatory training. They organise bespoke training to support staff to respond to the individual needs of the children.

Leaders and managers have made improvements to the monitoring and oversight within the home and these changes are starting to embed into practice. Records are written directly to the children and there is management oversight throughout case files.

Supervision and team meetings take place regularly, but lack challenge or reflection on practice. Leaders and managers are not able to describe improvements needed in the home and there is a lack of critical challenge to accurately understand how the home is performing.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children are able to maintain and develop their cultural or religious beliefs as far as practicable and where appropriate, through participation and instruction. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.22)

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: SC028868

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Step-A-Side Company Ltd

Registered provider address: Step-A-Side Company Ltd, 29 Market Place, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 8AA

Responsible individual: Rachel Carwardine

Registered manager: Jenny Davis

Inspector

Stacey Pellow, Social Care Inspector

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