

SC032565

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides residential short breaks for up to six children with learning and physical disabilities. It provides short breaks at weekends and occasionally during the week during school holidays. The manager registered in 2013.

The home is operated by a local authority.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 August 2021

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: 13 August 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2019	Full	Good
29/05/2018	Full	Good
01/08/2017	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

During the COVID-19 pandemic, children have continued to enjoy socialising with their friends and having fun during their short breaks. One parent told the inspector, 'I feel comfortable leaving her here; I know she is being looked after well. She loves talking about her stay when she comes home.'

Children make good progress. Children develop independence skills, learn how to care for themselves and increase their mobility. Through the use of communication aids, such as Makaton, they begin to influence decisions that affect their daily lives.

Children seeking physical affection and contact from staff is not discouraged. This can include holding hands and appropriate hugs. Staff know the children very well and have a good knowledge of their individual needs and vulnerabilities. This gives children a sense of acceptance and security when they are away from their families.

Staff are skilful in supporting children to express their views, wishes and feelings. They modify their communication skills through a range of aids that reflect the needs of individual children. As a result, children can contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

The learning experiences for children are good. Staff encourage children to succeed in their education and make sure that all achievements, no matter how small, are celebrated. This enables children to feel valued and have a sense of pride in what they achieve.

Children live in a stimulating and warm environment. The home is welcoming, and its décor and design meet the specific needs of each child. Children take pride in their bedrooms, enjoy their own personal space and have an array of personal possessions. However, some aspects of the home are in need of modernisation. For example, more work is required to improve the garden and aspects of the children's bathroom.

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

Children who have complex health needs enjoy their short break because knowledgeable and skilled staff protect them. Staff work collaboratively with parents and professionals to mitigate risks and ensure children are supported. Consequently, staff identify safeguarding risks quickly and respond to them promptly.

The registered manager effectively safeguards children. Safeguarding concerns are well managed. Prompt monitoring of incidents and quick referrals to safeguarding agencies promote the welfare of children. Staff fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Staff ensure that each child has an individualised risk assessment to reflect their specific vulnerabilities. This document helps staff to identify children's individual needs and how to help to keep children safe.

Staff are highly trained to understand safeguarding and child protection. In addition, staff receive training to carry out medical procedures such as safe administration of rescue medication. This comprehensive training helps to ensure that children's health needs are met effectively.

The registered manager ensures that staff undergo the required checks before they start working with children. As a result, children are cared for and supported by suitably vetted adults.

The registered manager and staff implement strategies well to de-escalate children's behaviours. Restraints is always a last resort. However, the registered manager's oversight is not always good. For example, documents do not contain all the relevant information about the restraint and the effectiveness of the measure. Not all staff have a debrief following an incident. These missed opportunities do not ensure that restraint practice is proportionate and safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and staff provide children with good quality of care to reflect the home's statement of purpose. Feedback from the independent visitor is routinely considered and actions implemented. Children's experiences in the home are positive.

The registered manager has good partnership working with others. This includes parents and social workers. Children benefit from this tailored support which has a positive impact on the progress they make.

Staff feel supported by the registered manager. Team meetings are regular and enable staff to consider the care they provide to children. However, the registered manager does not always use regular practice-related supervision to enable staff to reflect on their practice. Some staff members have not received supervision in line with the home's statement of purpose. Therefore, staff do not have consistently good opportunities to develop their learning through supervision sessions.

Staff did not receive face-to-face training during the COVID-19 pandemic. The registered manager has not used technology well to ensure that staff continue to receive refresher training in epilepsy awareness, first aid, medication and restraint. The staff have not been given full opportunity to refresh their skills and knowledge.

Not all staff who work in the home have satisfactory qualifications to meet the needs of children. One out of six staff members has not completed their required level 3 qualification within the specified timescale.

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, 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualification and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)) This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that all staff receive refresher mandatory training.	17 September 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has	17 September 2021

attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ('the Level 3 Diploma'); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff have completed the relevant qualification in residential childcare.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff receive regular reflective supervision.	17 September 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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")—	17 September 2021

has spoken to the user about the measure.
(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(vii)(b)(i))

This particularly refers to the registered manager ensuring that behaviour management plans are detailed and contain the relevant information.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all aspects of the home are welcoming. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC032565

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Stoke-On-Trent City Council, Swann House,
Boothan Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4SY

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Robert Snape

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

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