

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 at weekends and occasionally during the week in school holidays. The manager was registered in 2013, and the home is operated by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 August 2019

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: 29 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/05/2018	Full	Good
01/08/2017	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
18/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- The Statement of Purpose is of particular importance to this Standard (regulation 6(2)(a) and (b)(i)). Homes are required to develop and keep under review a 'Statement of Purpose' (regulation 16 and schedule 1). The home's Statement of Purpose should be child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the children in their care. The information set out in the Statement of Purpose is an essential part of the process of agreement between the registered person and placing authority that a placement in that home is the right one for that child, and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14. paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. Staff should support children to take part in school trips, out of school and other clubs, volunteering and leisure activities ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5). This is with reference to helping the children to be able to participate in activities away from the home.
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their trainings needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11). This is with reference to ensuring that staff are given the necessary access to resources to improve their learning about e-safety.
- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12). This is with reference to ensuring that staff demonstrate professional curiosity when children are using their own electronic devices to access the internet.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good care from a stable and committed staff team. The staff know the children well and are nurturing and responsive in meeting the children's individual needs.

Good planning by staff means that children get to know who they will be staying with for their short breaks. This helps to reduce children's anxieties and helps them to form longstanding friendships.

Children make good progress from their starting points. Staff set targets that help each child to develop life skills. As a result, children become increasingly independent. Staff capture this progress on the home's achievement tree. This gives children a sense of pride in what they have achieved.

The home offers a range of activities. Children have access to a sensory garden, swings, games and a trampoline. These activities help the children to have fun during their short-break stays. However, children's opportunities to access the wider community are limited. This means that children are not given the opportunity to participate in activities away from the home.

Staff are skilful in helping children to express their wishes and feelings. Staff adapt their communication through a range of communication aids that reflect the needs of individual children. Consequently, children have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

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

Staff follow detailed risk assessments to help to keep children safe.

Safeguarding incidents are well managed. Managers ensure that allegations are promptly referred to the appropriate agencies and investigated accordingly.

Staff have a clear understanding of the importance of safeguarding and the need to stay vigilant. However, this good practice does not extend to having professional curiosity when children use their own electronic devices to access the internet. This has the potential to put children at risk of accessing material which is unsuitable for their age and to engage with people who could pose a risk to their safety.

Managers ensure that staff are safely recruited. As a result, children are cared for by suitably vetted staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is child focused and ambitious to improve the quality of care.

Managers and staff are passionate about the children and work hard to ensure that children have positive experiences during their short-break stays.

The home's statement of purpose is lacking some information, for example ways in which the service offers appropriate role models to children, the process for the administration of medication and details about the experience of the staff team. These omissions leave stakeholders without up-to-date information about the service.

Managers ensure that staff receive mandatory training. However, not all staff have received training in e-safety. This omission means that staff are not well informed of all the potential risks that children can face when using social media platforms.

Staff receive regular supervision and have their performance appraised annually.

The manager ensures that when new children are referred to the service staff have all essential information.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: City of Stoke-on-Trent, Swann House, Booths Road,
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4SY

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Robert Snape

Inspector

Debbie Bond, social care inspector

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