

SC035380

Registered provider: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. It provides care to children with physical and learning disabilities. The home offers short-break care for up to five children and one longer-term placement.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2022.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 2025

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: 20 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/05/2024	Full	Good
31/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/02/2023	Full	Good
01/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children were spoken to during the inspection.

The home is large with ample space for the children to spend time together or apart. There are a variety of activities for the children to enjoy, which support their development. When children stay over at the home, staff personalise their space with items that they have chosen and belongings that they bring from home. This makes it homely and comfortable for the children.

Children get to know the staff and the home before they come to stay. Staff work closely with those who know the children well to get to understand their needs, likes and dislikes. One parent said that she knows her child likes to visit the home, as he gets excited when he sees the staff car. This means that children are well-prepared for starting their short-break stays.

Staff build trusting relationships with families. Staff maintain effective communication with families about children's care and experiences. One parent said that the positive communication from staff has put them at ease when their child spends time at the home. Another parent said, 'It is the best thing that has happened to my family.'

Children are supported to experience a range of activities that are suited to their interests and abilities. Children have been involved in improving the environment with a new play and sensory area. Staff support children to have new experiences, such as trips abroad and days out in the community. The opportunities provided by the home have helped children to build their confidence and enhanced their positive experiences.

Children have accessed the service for a long period of time. Staff understand the ways in which children communicate and are creative with the tools they use to help children express their views. An occupational therapist who visits the home said, 'Staff are in tune with the children.' This helps children to share their views and emotions.

Staff prepare children to move on from the service. They work closely with other professionals to make sure that there is a shared understanding of the children's needs. Children get to spend time getting to know their new home and the staff. Children are provided with memory books containing photos that capture the fun times they have had.

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

Risk assessments help staff to understand how to respond to each child's individual risks. Assessments are up to date and have clear guidance for staff to follow. When risks change for children, risk assessments are promptly updated and communicated to the

wider staff team. This ensures that all staff are aware of any changes to children's risk and the actions expected of them to keep children safe.

Staff use effective de-escalation strategies to support children when they are struggling with their emotions. Physical interventions are rarely used, and when they are, they are used to keep children safe. Staff are trained to support children and hold them safely. Children are then given the opportunity to communicate with staff using their preferred methods of communication. This helps children feel safer.

Some children accessing the service have complex health needs. Staff receive relevant training to care for children effectively and administer medication safely. The manager has a robust process in place to ensure that medication is recorded and administered effectively.

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and are proactive in working with them around their individual risks. When children need safety measures put in place, the management team works closely with other professionals to ensure that restrictions are regularly reviewed and are in line with the children's care plans. This means that any restrictive measures used to keep children safe are proportionate and necessary.

Staff are appropriately vetted before working in the home. Staff receive a robust induction into the home, which includes shadowing experienced staff and being allocated a mentor to support them through their induction. This means that staff understand the children and their role before working independently.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is run by an experienced manager who knows the children well. The manager is committed to supporting children to achieve. The manager is ambitious for the future of the home and wants to continuously improve the care it offers to children.

Staff well-being is a priority. Staff share that they feel supported and listened to by the management team. Staff who are new to the role said that they feel well prepared for working in the home. This enables staff to carry out their role effectively.

The management team have effective working relationships with partnership agencies and families so that they can provide children with the right support. The manager has appropriately challenged other agencies and advocates strongly on behalf of children. Feedback from all professionals was overwhelmingly positive about the effective communication from staff. This helps to improve outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers regularly monitor the quality of care provided for children. The registered manager has a clear process in place for auditing and monitoring all aspects of the home. The manager has been able to use this to identify areas where improvement is needed and to support staff to learn from this in team meetings. This embeds a learning culture in the home.

Staff receive regular supervision. Managers use supervision to offer support to staff and review their development. Staff say that they find supervision helpful. However, staff are not provided with time to reflect on their individual practice in supervision sessions, and this reduces the opportunities they have for learning and development.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision that allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61 paragraph 13.2)

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: SC035380

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stockton Borough Council

Registered provider address: Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees,
TS18 1TW

Responsible individual: Debra Farrow

Registered manager: Dawn Coyle

Inspector

Natalie Clark, Social Care Inspector

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