

# SC047483

Registered provider: Mulberry House Care Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It offers care for up to three children who may have had adverse childhood experiences.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2024 and is suitably qualified.

### Inspection dates: 11 and 12 February 2025

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 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:** 27 June 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 27/06/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 08/06/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 08/03/2022      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 02/10/2019      | Full            | Good                            |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Two children spoke to the inspector about their positive experiences of living in the home. Another child, who has moved on from the home since the last inspection, said, 'It was difficult to leave. I packed my belongings, but I couldn't pack the most important thing, my second family. I have so many positive memories that I will treasure.'

The registered manager carefully considers the needs of children before agreeing for them to move into the home. She reflects on information from people who know the child well to ensure that the child's needs can be met alongside the other children who live in the home. Since the last inspection, four children have moved into the home. The registered manager helps children to prepare for the move by providing them with information about the home and staff and offering them an opportunity to meet the children they will be living with. Children receive a warm welcome, which reduces their anxieties.

Children benefit from living in a stable, nurturing environment with established routines where positive relationships flourish. They have a strong sense of permanence and belonging. Children feel comfortable expressing their views, wishes and feelings to the registered manager and staff. One child accesses support from an independent visitor, which enhances their overall well-being.

Improved school attendance influences children's learning and contributes to developing their social skills. The registered manager and staff work well with teachers to ensure that school continues to be a positive experience for children.

Children access a variety of activities and holiday opportunities that provide them with positive experiences and allow them to explore their interests and enjoy new things. On Christmas Eve, children and staff wore matching pyjamas and enjoyed opening Christmas Eve boxes together. These experiences encourage children to develop family traditions.

Independence is nurtured, taking account of each child's age and stage of development. It is commendable that the registered manager and staff recognise the importance of affirming the self-worth of children who are accustomed to being self-sufficient. One child, who found it difficult to be cared for, now accepts that staff will make her drinks and cook meals for her.

Health is a priority. Children are registered with health services and are up to date on routine checks. Children have health plans that guide staff in promoting their well-being.

Children's well-being remains at the forefront of the practices implemented by registered manager and staff, with their achievements consistently acknowledged and celebrated.

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

Children feel safe and protected from harm. They are supported by staff to manage relationships with their friends. Staff advocate for children to have experiences that are commonly associated with most teenagers. Staff are curious about children's friendship groups and help them to recognise behaviours displayed by friends that are not considered by staff to be positive. This enables children to develop skills in making positive choices.

The registered manager and staff understand children's risks identified in their plans. There is clear guidance for staff on effective strategies to use to reduce and respond to risks and behaviours. Staff's ability to implement these and support children to understand their emotions contributes to a reduction in risks for children who live in the home.

On the rare occasions when children hurt themselves, staff respond well. They assess the child's health and provide first aid. One child has access to their own first-aid kit.

Three new members of staff have started working in the home. There are effective recruitment systems in place to reduce the risk of children been cared for by unsuitable individuals.

There have been no complaints or allegations since the last inspection. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of reporting concerns to the registered manager and escalating these if necessary. One member of staff said, 'I would move mountains to keep a child safe.'

There have been some concerns around one child accessing and sharing inappropriate content online. The registered manager and staff respond sensitively to these situations to help children understand the risks and implications of their behaviour. Staff educate children about online safety, and there are age-restriction filters on the home's WiFi. If children have mobile data on devices, staff carry out internet history and device checks.

When there are concerns that a child is not where they are expected to be, staff ensure that information is shared with relevant family members and professionals. There are positive working relationships with police who assist in locating children and returning them home. Staff ensure that children are welcomed home and support children to understand why they were worried. Children are provided with an opportunity to speak with an independent person about their experience while missing. Plans to support staff to find children who go missing are not comprehensive, and records kept by staff do not detail the locations that have been searched. This practice has the potential to delay the child being located.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager is passionate about the care of children who live in the home. Her motivation, drive and commitment to providing children with positive experiences is

worthy of recognition. Her vision for the home is child focused and aspirational. She ensures that staff are nurturing of children and understands how trauma affects children.

The registered manager is highly regarded by all the staff. One member of staff said, 'She is one of the most supportive managers I have ever had. She offers lots of help and guidance within the role and home and also takes an interest in us as individuals.' Another staff member said, 'The manager is approachable. You don't have to wait for supervision; they are always available in or out of office hours. Staff welfare is a priority.'

The home has enough staff to care for children. Most staff are qualified. One is working towards the relevant qualification but holds a similar qualification. Another new staff member intends to enrol on the relevant course following their probation period. The registered manager ensures that all staff keep their learning up to date by attending short courses that will enable them to fulfil their job roles and meet the individual needs of children who live in the home. Annual appraisals are carried out to support staff development.

Effective monitoring and recording systems are in place. This enables the registered manager to understand children's experiences and progression as well as the home's strengths and areas to focus on developing in the future.

Regular team meetings, supervision sessions and clinical consultations provide reflective spaces for staff to review children's plans and agree on consistent approaches to enable them to make progress. Staff value the time the registered manager invests in the welfare of staff and promoting and empowering them in their role.

Improvements to the home environment further contribute to a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for all children, staff and visitors.

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

### **Recommendation**

- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission. In particular, children's plans should clearly identify and prioritise areas staff should search to locate a child who is not where they are expected to be. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

### **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:** SC047483

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Mulberry House Care Homes Limited

**Registered provider address:** 2 Railway Street, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 2EA

**Responsible individual:** Lisa Hall

**Registered manager:** Narelle Price

## Inspector

Helen Dunn, Social Care Inspector

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