

SC369825

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority. It is registered to care for up to two children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

There is a permanent registered manager who is suitably qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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: 17 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2022	Full	Good
05/10/2021	Full	Good
26/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/07/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress at this home. They benefit from positive relationships with a dedicated staff team. Staff understand children well and are enthusiastic about providing children with positive experiences. Both children have been on holiday with staff and have been supported to explore their interests. One child has attended taster sessions at different clubs and the other child enjoys going fishing with staff.

Staff manage transitions well. As a result, children who have moved into and out of the home have had positive experiences. A parent wrote that staff had taken time to understand their child and they praised staff for their patience, guidance and support.

Staff have supported children to personalise their bedrooms. Both children picked the colours for their walls and have put up posters which reflect their interests. One child enjoys having multi-coloured strip lights around their room which they can control remotely. Both children said that they have everything they need. As a result, children feel a sense of belonging.

For one child, preparation for independence has been strong and he has progressed well. The staff are using a planner to track the child's goals and achievements. The planner clearly highlights areas of competency and gives clear targets. Staff understand the actions they need to take. Support for independence for the other child could be better. The manager has a plan to address this.

Staff ensure that children's voices are heard. One child has regular visits from their advocate and they enjoy time together doing activities. There are monthly meetings with children to gather their views and children are involved in updating their plans. There are clear processes for making complaints. Information on how to make a complaint is included in the children's guide. Both children said that they can speak to staff if they have concerns. As a result, children feel listened to and valued.

Children are supported to plan menus and one child prepares his own meals. However, one child said that there was not enough food in the fridge. Shopping was done but options for healthy lunches were still limited. The manager has a plan to support the child with choosing healthier lunches. However, evening meals are varied and balanced. L;

Staff support children well to ensure their health needs are met. Children are registered with local medical practices and have attended regular check-ups. The manager takes children's health needs seriously and he has advocated strongly to ensure that their needs are met. For example, he challenged professionals and escalated his concerns when a child's health assessment was delayed.

Education is promoted and supported well. One child now has full attendance and is making good progress. Another child has recently lost their college placement. However, a creative approach has ensured that he has options available and there are appropriate plans to support him.

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

Children's plans and risk assessments are detailed and clear. Plans are regularly updated and provide staff with information on each child's specific risks and vulnerabilities. Clear guidance enables staff to take appropriate and effective action to keep children safe.

Staff respond well when children go missing from home. There are clear protocols and staff act quickly to locate children and ensure their safe return. Strong partnership working ensures that information is shared quickly and appropriate action is taken. One child frequently goes missing from the home but this has recently reduced. Consequently, children are safer.

Staff are aware of the whistle-blowing procedures in the home and know what action to take in response to allegations and complaints. This means that children feel listened to and are kept safe in the home.

Staff have positive relationships with children and carry out focused work around areas of need. Consequences and physical interventions are rare. The team focuses on discussion to support children to reflect on their behaviour.

The home has a dedicated therapeutic team who meet regularly with staff. They carry out training with the team and support staff to reflect on children's experiences. This enables staff to better understand the reasons behind children's behaviours. Staff provide the environment and support which meets children's needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is dedicated to achieving positive outcomes for children. Care planning is a strength, and he is clear in his expectations for high-quality support for children both at the home and in the future.

Staff are provided with a wide range of training that informs their practice and meets the individual needs of the children. A creative approach has been taken to ensure that training is relevant and impactful. A recent training course involved using virtual reality headsets to enable a full immersive experience. One staff member said that it was the best training that they had ever had.

Staffing is provided in line with children's assessed needs. When there are shortfalls through sickness, the manager has used a small pool of experienced bank staff. No agency staff have been used at the home. Children benefit from a consistent staff team.

The manager has supported partnership working with external agencies to ensure that children are safeguarded effectively. When one child was at particular risk, weekly meetings took place with a range of different professionals and clear actions were agreed. Strong multi-agency working ensures that risks are shared and helps to keep children safe.

The manager ensures that staff receive regular supervision and have annual appraisals. Supervisions focus on reflection and are used alongside individual development plans to support staff to progress. Good oversight of staff practice helps to keep care consistent and of high quality.

The manager has introduced a clear framework for using consequences for children. Reflective discussion takes place frequently and supports children to understand the impact of their actions. However, records of consequences are not always fully completed. This impacts on the manager's oversight and ability to review the effectiveness of consequences that have been used.

Children are supported with planning for independent living. One child has made significant progress and is cooking his own meals, travelling and doing his banking, with minimal support. However, independence planning for one child has not suitably identified his areas of need. For example, the child was unsupervised while doing his own cooking and he tried to pick up the food with his hands while it was still hot. There were no staff in the kitchen to support him with this.

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, The 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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that consequence records are completed in full.	16 January 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff help children prepare for moving on from the home. This should include supporting children to develop essential independence skills to prepare them emotionally and practically, including with their self-care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.27)
- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for their needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8)

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: SC369825

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Registered provider address: City of Stoke-on-Trent, Swann House, Boothem Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4SY

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Daniel Barker

Inspector

Laura Norcop, Social Care Inspector

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