

# 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 children's home is run by the local authority and offers care and accommodation for two young people who have experienced childhood instability leading to trauma and associated complex behaviours.

**Inspection dates:** 26 to 27 June 2019

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | requires improvement to be good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

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|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | requires improvement to be good |
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 3 July 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 03/07/2018      | Full            | Good                    |
| 27/02/2018      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 23/05/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 01/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |

## 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   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—<br/>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(iv)(ix))</p> | 20/08/2019 |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—<br/>that staff—</p> <p>understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(xii)(xiii))</p>                                       |            |

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| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(iv)(c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>20/08/2019</p> |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(h))</p> | <p>20/08/2019</p> |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14(1)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>20/08/2019</p> |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Young people's overall experiences and progress have been compromised because of an unsettled period. Some young people have not made good progress and staff have not been able to manage young people's high-risk behaviours, including substance misuse and becoming involved in gangs and criminal activity. Consequently, some young people's placements have ended prematurely.

Young people have a range of school placements available to meet their individual needs. However, despite the staff's best efforts, some young people find it very difficult to maintain a positive routine that enables them to attend school regularly. This limited attendance has affected young people's abilities to learn and achieve academic success.

Young people's health and well-being are promoted. Staff ensure that statutory health assessments are completed for all young people, and help each young person to attend all required medical appointments. Medication is stored safely, and records are maintained on the administration of medication.

Young people engage with support services and understand the risks associated with substance misuse and smoking. However, despite staff encouraging young people to follow professional advice, some young people continue to make negative choices that can potentially impact on their long-term health.

Staff maintain regular communication with young people's social workers and family members, and support and facilitate young people's visits to family members. This promotes young people's sense of identity and enables them to retain positive links with people who are important to them.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Relationships between young people are sometimes volatile. There have been incidents when young people have assaulted each other. There have been occasions when young people have not felt safe because other young people have bullied them. This affects young people's welfare and their experience of living in the home. Staff take some steps to protect young people and make it clear to them that bullying is not acceptable. However, staff have failed to see the potential emergence of a bullying culture in the home.

Staff do not always ensure that up-to-date risk assessments are in place and understood. This limits the staff team's ability to review the strategies that help to keep young people safe.

Staff complete regular health and safety checks and follow a range of safety procedures to protect young people from potential hazards. These include carrying out fire drills to ensure that young people know what to do in the case of an emergency. However, two windows in a young person's bedroom have had additional screws inserted into them to restrict the window from opening. This is potentially dangerous and is not conducive to creating a homely and well-cared-for environment.

Some young people's behaviours have been extremely challenging, and staff have become overly reliant on using physical intervention to manage young people's challenging behaviour. Because of this, there has been an increase in the use of physical interventions since the last inspection.

Swift action is taken by staff when young people go missing from the home. Partnership working with the police and safeguarding agencies helps to ensure that young people are safe. Staff go looking for young people and, in line with protocols, share information with the police at an early stage. Young people are provided with an independent person to speak to on their return home. This helps to add detail to existing information, which, if appropriately considered, may help to protect them from going missing again.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

There is a new manager in charge of the home. She took up post in April 2019 and is currently in the process of applying for registration with Ofsted. The manager holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management in working with children and young people.

The home has had a turbulent few months owing to the change of manager and some staff changes. The new manager is beginning to develop a greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The manager is yet to establish effective monitoring systems, but has started to make changes to take the home forward. However, her limited time in post means that she has not yet had the opportunity to fully embed these changes.

Monthly staff meetings take place and staff receive monthly supervisions. Staff receive training that supports them in their role. All staff are qualified to a level 3 diploma in residential childcare, or are working towards the qualification within the regulatory timescale.

Staff have developed good links with key stakeholders, including the police, social workers and parents. These partnerships help to ensure that young people have access to help at the point of need.

### **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:** SC369825

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

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

**Responsible individual:** Tracey Docksey

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Dave Carrigan: social care inspector



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