

SC381089

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 managed by the local authority. It offers care for up to two children who have experienced early childhood instability that has led to trauma and/or associated complex behaviours.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2016 and holds a leadership and management qualification at level 5.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 January 2024

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: 21 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2023	Full	Good
31/08/2021	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Full	Outstanding
04/09/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home and one child has moved out of the home. There are currently two children living in the home.

The staff actively support children as they move on from the home. A child who moved out of the home maintains contact with staff, which shows the trust and positive relationships that developed during the child's time in the home.

Staff ensure that children's views, wishes and feelings are considered in the care that they receive. Children's views are captured by staff through direct work, one-to-one conversations and planned meetings. This ensures that children can participate in the day-to-day decisions that affect their lives. Consequently, children feel listened to and engage positively in the home.

The manager and staff support children in their education. As a result, both children are in education and have excellent attendance. One education provider said, 'Staff always attend reviews and parents' evenings.'

Staff ensure that children's health needs are met. Children are supported to attend all their health appointments. Staff promote children's fitness and well-being by encouraging them to participate in activities such as walking. The provider's clinical team supports staff to establish appropriate approaches to promote children's emotional health.

Staff help children to spend time with the people who are important to them, such as family and friends. Staff have positive relationships with family members and ensure that safe and meaningful family time is promoted. One child's family member said, 'Staff give us space in contact, which is nice.' Another family member said, '[Name of child] is in a proper home. I trust staff, and they go beyond what they do.' Families recognise that their child's individual needs are provided for by staff who care about them.

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

The registered manager and staff prioritise children's safety. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs and known risks. One child said, 'I can trust staff.' There have been no safeguarding incidents in this home since the last inspection. This is because children feel safe in their environment and trust the staff who care for them.

Children's behaviour management plans support staff to use individualised de-escalation techniques. As a result, there have been no incidents of restraint. Staff work with children to help them understand behaviour that may present a risk to them. This work has supported children to be increasingly safe.

Children do not go missing from the home. There are clear risk assessments in place, should any child go missing. These assessments provide staff with guidance on how to respond to such incidents and manage them effectively.

The internal systems overseeing children's internet usage are effective. The use of parental controls ensures that children only access age-appropriate content. Additionally, staff educate children on potential online risks and responsible behaviour online. These actions help children to use the internet in a safe manner.

Health and safety procedures, including fire arrangements, are good. Fire equipment is regularly checked and tested, and staff and children take part in fire drills. Each child has a personal evacuation plan that provides staff with insight into the level of support they need to safely evacuate the home. These measures ensure the safety of everyone in the home in the event of a fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a qualified, experienced and competent registered manager who demonstrates strong and effective leadership of the home. The manager is inspirational and ambitious for children and staff alike. A staff member said, 'The home is managed really well, the manager knows the children and staff.'

Children benefit from being supported by a stable, reliable and well-established team of staff who know them extremely well. Staff retention is high, and no bank or agency staff are used. This means that children benefit from having consistent carers with whom they develop positive relationships.

The manager ensures that staff are well supported to carry out their roles effectively. Staff have received a variety of training that is relevant to the children's needs. The therapeutic model of care used by the home is understood by all staff. Consequently, staff have the knowledge and skills to provide good-quality care to children.

Staff participate in monthly clinical meetings that are led by the provider's in-house psychologist. During these sessions, the psychologist provides expert advice to staff to help them understand and meet the children's needs.

The manager ensures that staff receive regular reflective supervision to help them develop their practice. Safeguarding and children's experiences are at the centre of supervision discussions, and there is an emphasis on improving the quality of care.

On one occasion, the manager failed to challenge external professionals about their actions after an incident with a child. The manager has also not challenged agencies when review minutes have not been received within a suitable time frame. On two occasions, Ofsted did not receive copies of the independent person's reports for the home, which limits the regulator's oversight of the home.

While the manager's internal monitoring systems are good, they occasionally fall short in identifying weaknesses in staff practices in the home. For example, staff did not record conversations about a child's work experience. This has an impact on the manager's ability to oversee and ensure the quality of children's experiences. These shortfalls have not affected the good level of care provided to children.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)) The registered person should actively challenge external professionals on delayed paperwork following children's reviews.	29 February 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring. This specifically relates to ensuring that the independent person provides a copy of their report to Ofsted. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.4)
- The registered person should ensure that all children's case records are kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: SC381089

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Christopher Whalley

Inspector

Jas Nahar, Social Care Inspector

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