

SC387784

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 early childhood instability that has led to trauma and/or associated complex behaviours.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2018 and is qualified to the national vocational qualification level 4 in leadership and management for care services.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 12 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2019	Full	Good
23/01/2018	Full	Good
23/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/11/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people receive an extremely high standard of care from a dedicated and stable staff team. This consistency of care enables young people to make very good progress from their initial starting points. Young people experience care that helps to improve their emotional well-being, increase their self-esteem and prepares them for their future.

Staff are highly committed to helping young people succeed educationally. Staff persevere in helping young people to overcome any barriers to their learning and have high aspirations for the young people and believe that they can achieve. As a result, young people's confidence has increased, and they have aspirations for their future.

Staff ensure that young people's everyday health needs are promptly addressed. Staff encourage young people to engage with specialist health services to improve their emotional health. When young people are reluctant to engage, staff find creative ways to encourage young people to talk about what is causing them to be anxious or upset. Consequently, young people begin to accept help.

Sensitive individual key-work sessions have resulted in sustained improvements in young people's self-esteem and confidence. The young people report that they feel fully included in the day-to-day activities of the home, receive regular feedback and feel that they are always listened to.

Staff support young people to spend time with their families, when it is safe and in their best interests. This promotes young people's sense of identity. Staff work with parents and have good lines of communication. One parent told the inspector, 'I am more than happy with the quality of care my boys receive, they are both happy and settled. The staff have done a great job with them.'

Young people's inclusion in community life is outstanding. Young people have made friendships in the area and regularly spend time with their friends. They enjoy an excellent range of well-considered activities and experiences, which are thoroughly risk-assessed in line with individual plans.

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

Young people are safe due to the staff's diligence and understanding of safeguarding and risk management. Highly effective care planning minimises the risks to young people's safety and well-being.

Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's risks and vulnerabilities and clear tailored strategies help to guide staff in supporting young people in a safe way. Furthermore, staff engage young people in direct work relating to their own personal

safety. For example, staff have carried out bespoke work with both young people on online safety. This has helped both boys to become increasingly safe.

Staff are very well trained in safeguarding matters. They can recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and risks relating to harmful behaviour, criminality and child sexual exploitation. Staff know exactly what they need to do when they have concerns about young people and take decisive action to safeguard all young people in their care.

Young people's behaviour and relationships with each other have improved. Staff recognise the individual triggers that lead to challenging behaviour. Staff take effective action to support young people to manage their emotions in a constructive manner.

A strength of the home is the cohesiveness of the staff team and the consistency in its implementation of behaviour management strategies.

Staff have excellent insight into young people's individual abilities to assess and manage risk. The manager ensures that there are systems in place that provide young people with reassurances, such as regular phone calls when they are away from the home or a staff member being available if needed at a specific time.

Regular health and safety checks, routine servicing of equipment and robust risk assessments ensure that the home is safe for young people, staff and visitors. Staff are trained in fire safety procedures and they ensure that young people take part in fire evacuation drills, so they understand how to leave the home safely in an emergency.

Recruitment and selection procedures are excellent. Management oversight at all levels reflects a total commitment to ensuring that only the most suitable adults are employed to work in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths of each staff member and is able to achieve the best from his staff team. He is also effective in challenging practice that is not up to his high standards or expectations.

The manager and his deputy have created a supportive environment for staff in which they feel able to constructively challenge each other and debate relevant subjects. Staff confirm that they receive regular and effective supervision.

All the staff have worked together for some time. This continuity of staffing has been pivotal in promoting young people's attachments.

All staff hold the required level 3 diploma in residential childcare or equivalent qualification. Staff are also provided with a range of training that informs their practice. The registered manager encourages staff to develop their skills through training opportunities. Consequently, highly skilled and effective staff support the young people.

Monitoring arrangements for the home are highly effective. Issues arising from the manager's and the external person's monitoring ensure that the manager has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the home. He is quick to address issues that arise.

The staff and the manager have established excellent working relationships with a range of agencies and professionals who are involved in young people's care. Staff work closely with teachers, social workers, health professionals and the police. The manager challenges partner agencies appropriately and effectively when required. Consequently, young people know that they can trust the staff to advocate for them.

The manager is not complacent. Research-informed practice continues to develop from a strong and confident base, which is making a difference to the lives and experiences of the young people. For example, the manager has researched the crisis development model to address attitudes and approaches used by staff for crisis intervention.

The manager has addressed the one requirement made at the last inspection effectively. There is now a much more positive approach by staff when responding to young people's challenging behaviours.

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: SC387784

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Gareth Dawson

Inspector

Dave Carrigan, social care inspector

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