

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 for two children 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 holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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: 7 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
12/02/2019	Full	Good
23/01/2018	Full	Good
23/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children live in this home. The children are making good progress because they live in a settled home and have good relationships with staff and each other.

Children receive good-quality care and support that helps them make good progress. Detailed risk assessments for their physical, emotional and social needs help staff provide good care. Staff use this information about children's needs to develop detailed individual care plans that provide clear guidance and strategies for them to follow and this reduces potential harm.

One strength of the home is the positive relationships that staff have with the children. These relationships have been instrumental in supporting the children through the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and other challenging times. As a result of these relationships, children feel safe and trust the staff.

Children attend appropriate school settings that reflect their educational needs and have good school attendance. Staff work well with teachers to ensure that children's learning is tailored to their specific needs. Staff are persistent in promoting children's engagement in learning. Consequently, one child has been chosen from school to attend college to complete an information technology course. This is a significant achievement for this child, who previously had difficulty in completing school-based work.

The physical environment of the home is welcoming, comfortable and nurturing. Children take pride in their bedrooms and are encouraged to personalise them with different themes in line with their wishes. Children's photographs and certificates are proudly displayed throughout the home. Staff ensure that the home's exterior is well maintained. For example, the children benefit from the garden, which features a range of flowers and plants; this helps to create a homely atmosphere.

Staff work hard and have been creative in supporting children to be active despite the restrictions placed on recreational and leisure activities during the pandemic. For example, children have completed a 10-mile bike ride in the countryside and visited local attractions such as National Trust sites. These activities have promoted children's mental health.

There is a strong emphasis on maintaining children's family relationships. Staff work well with children's family members to ensure that children are supported to stay in touch with important individuals in their lives. They have a good understanding of these relationships. For example, children's family members are encouraged to visit the home and enjoy family events. A parent reported: 'It's a fantastic place [the home]; I cannot fault it.' As a result, children's emotional well-being is improved, and they retain a sense of identity through contact with their families.

Staff prioritise children's emotional, physical and mental health needs. The registered manager escalates concerns to the relevant professionals when children's health needs are compromised. Children have access to a range of health services because staff work collaboratively with health professionals and therapeutic services so that children have the help and support they need. However, the in-house therapeutic services do not always ensure that one child has a clear plan of intervention. This delay has the potential to compromise a child's health and limit their progress.

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

Children's risks and vulnerabilities are thoroughly assessed, regularly reviewed and well documented. Personalised risk assessments provide staff with the necessary guidance they need to confidently promote children's safety and well-being. This support helps staff to have a better understanding of children's vulnerabilities and promotes their emotional well-being.

Incidents of children going missing from the home are rare. However, when children go missing, staff respond well. They follow procedures by looking for children and liaising with the police and other local services. These measures promote children's safety and demonstrate that staff care about them and want them to return home safely.

Incidents of restraint are rare. This is because staff have positive relationships with children. Staff are experienced in using distraction techniques and using approaches to ensure that situations do not escalate. Children benefit from this and this contributes to their positive experiences.

Staff ensure that risk assessments outline the risks to children's safety and provide clear guidance on how to reduce risk risks and manage them. However, staff do not always ensure that they act on information contained in these documents. Staff do not always show professional curiosity and vigilance. For example, on several occasions, staff failed to follow guidance on monitoring children's electronic devices when there was a possible risk of sexual exploitation. This has the potential to leave vulnerable children at risk of harm.

Staff have important conversations with children about a range of topics, including equality and discrimination, sexual health, internet safety and how to manage their emotions and anxieties. However, on one occasion, staff did not have these discussions with one child about how he could keep himself safe from exploitation when a concern arose. Consequently, this did not support the child in understanding how to keep himself safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has successfully ensured that staff provide a good standard of care to children. This has been achieved with the support of the deputy manager

and staff team. The registered manager is committed and highly motivated. He shows genuine care and warmth for the children and staff he supports.

The independent reviewing officer for the children told the inspector that the registered manager has strong relationships with professionals as well as his staff team. This helps to ensure that children have robust care plans which meet their needs.

The registered manager has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the therapeutic model of care they implements in the home. They share this information effectively to staff in team meetings. Staff use this information to develop their learning and practice. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the registered manager has ensured that staff complete a range of mandatory training. They also undertake therapeutic training, underpinned by attachment theory. In addition, all staff have the relevant qualification in residential childcare.

Staff supervision arrangements are well established and provide excellent opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice. As such, staff feel supported. The registered manager uses this time creatively to monitor staff competence and progress in their development. Staff feel well supported and enjoy their work. This creates a calming and relaxed atmosphere within the home.

There are very positive partnerships with other agencies, such as the local authority, schools, college, police and services that support children's mental health. These ensure that children benefit from tailored support to enable them to stay safe and to make good progress.

Overall, the registered manager uses monitoring and review systems well to help him to have a good level of oversight of the home. However, the home's fire precaution work has not been fully completed. Work is ongoing by the local authority to address this shortfall.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) This particularly refers to staff ensuring that they follow guidance in risk assessments. It also relates to ensuring that staff support children to keep them safe from harm.	8 October 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that adequate precautions against the risk of fire are in place and that the fire risk assessment is kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that there is a clear plan of intervention for children's health needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)

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: SC387784

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: City of Stoke-On-Trent

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

Responsible individual: Tracey Docksey

Registered manager: Gareth Dawson

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021