

SC413985

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a charitable organisation. It provides care for up to 5 children with autism spectrum disorder and additional complex needs.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living at the home, and they spent time with the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2023.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 2026

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: 12 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/11/2024	Full	Good
23/01/2024	Full	Good
16/11/2022	Full	Good
08/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children are settled and view this as their home. They have been living together for several years and have built trusting relationships with staff. Staff, professionals and parents said that they are proud of the progress each child is making.

Staff provide nurturing, caring and child-centred support that responds to each child's individual needs. They implement well-planned routines that promote predictability and consistency. These routines help children overcome barriers and engage in everyday life.

Staff understand each child's communication style and actively consider their views. They support children to develop communication skills verbally and through visual aids, points of reference, and the Picture Exchange Communication System. As a result, children can make day-to-day decisions about their lives.

Children's health needs are met effectively. Staff work with health professionals to help children manage lifelong health conditions. Medication is managed appropriately. There is good management oversight to ensure that staff are trained and have the skills to safely administer medication to children.

Staff support children to attend school regularly. They maintain strong working relationships and daily communication with education staff. Children are settled in school, enjoy attending and continue to make educational progress.

Staff sensitively support children to develop their essential life skills. For example, children are supported to carry out small tasks around the home, prepare meals, attend to their personal hygiene, visit shops and travel on public transport.

Staff offer children a wide range of activities in the home and the local community. They provide choices and plan around children's interests. Activities include trips to the park, walks, sensory facilities, trampolining, zip wires and indoor play areas. These experiences help children have fun and build confidence.

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

Staff understand each child's individual needs and the level of support required to keep them safe. They provide high levels of supervision in line with each child's assessed needs. Staff also implement necessary restrictions, such as locking front and back doors, to prevent children from leaving without adult support. These measures arise from comprehensive assessments and are clearly documented.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans contain detailed guidance and strategies for staff. However, the manager does not always update these documents with current information and some plans contain inconsistencies between the identified risks

and the strategies recorded. This does not ensure that staff have the most up to date information.

Staff are calm and caring in their approach and have a good understanding of the behaviour's children display due to their needs. Physical interventions are only used when necessary to prevent a child from causing harm to themselves or others. The Manager maintains clear oversight of each incident, analysing patterns and triggers and advising staff on strategies to help children regulate their emotions more safely.

Staff recognise children's emotions and understand how they express them. They quickly identify when a child is unhappy and communicate with them so concerns can be addressed promptly.

When allegations have been raised about staffs practice, the manager has taken swift action to address these. Staff have been removed from duty while investigations take place. The manager has ensured that all appropriate safeguarding agencies are informed. As a result, children have been safeguarded effectively and there has been appropriate scrutiny of practice.

The home environment is spacious, child friendly, warm and welcoming. Staff actively incorporate children's sensory needs into everyday care. The refurbished garden offers a large soft-play area where children can play safely. However, in one child's bedroom, staff have removed window handles, and the restrictors require repair to allow the child to open the windows freely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced, qualified, child centred, with high expectations to continually improve the care provided to the children. He is supported by an experienced and equally committed deputy manager, and together they maintain strong oversight of day-to-day practice in the home.

A stable core staff team provides consistency for the children. Staff demonstrate a strong ethos of teamwork. Although there have been staff changes, the manager has ensured this has not affected the children's care. Staff demonstrated a detailed understanding of each child and consistently meet their individual needs.

Staff receive a comprehensive training programme, including the organisation's mandatory training. They value this training and say it helps them develop their practice. However, the manager has not ensured that all staff complete autism-specific training, which limits their ability to fully meet children's specialist needs. In addition, one staff member has not completed the required residential childcare qualification in the expected timescales.

The manager ensures that supervision sessions and appraisals take place in the appropriate timescales and are supportive for staff. These sessions allow staff to reflect

on their practice, discuss challenges and identify areas for development. Staff said that they feel well supported by the management team.

Staff attend regular team meetings that enable them to reflect, share information and strengthen consistent practice. The organisation's behaviour support team meets monthly with staff to offer guidance on meeting children's emotional and behavioural needs. This ensures staff adopt consistent, informed approaches in meeting each child's needs.

The management team advocates for children across all aspects of their lives, including education and health. They maintain positive and effective relationships with external professionals to ensure children's holistic needs are met.

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 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. 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. that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they have clear and consistent systems in place to monitor children's risk assessments and ensure that these clearly reflect children's current risks.	24 April 2026
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—	24 April 2026

meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (2)(b)(vii)(c)(i)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that window openings are managed through the use of effective restrictors rather than by removing the children's ability to open them. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is reinstated	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have received training on Autism, so they have the required knowledge and understanding to meet the needs of the children.	24 April 2026
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.	24 April 2026

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.

The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual—

does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or

works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have attained their qualifications within the appropriate time frames.

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: SC413985

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1JE

Responsible individual: Sara Aldridge

Registered manager: Kevin Clarke

Inspector

Simon Jones, Social Care Inspector

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