

SC442886

Registered provider: Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. It provides short- and long-term care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2025.

Three children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. All children were spoken to.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2025

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: 27 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/06/2023	Full	Good
04/01/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/03/2022	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children build good relationships with staff. Children said that they can share their feelings with staff. Staff talk to children about their past experiences and help them understand their emotions. One professional said, '[Name of child] is much more reflective and has insight into her difficulties from her past and where this comes from.'

Staff support children to build positive relationships with their families. They have helped one child to re-establish his relationship with his father, and another child has been supported to enjoy a holiday with their parent. Parents say that staff provide regular updates and support and encourage them to spend time with their child. This helps children to develop their relationships with people who are important to them.

Children's health needs are met. Staff are proactive in working with services to support children to meet their health needs. Staff are creative and carry out educational work when children struggle with attending health appointments. This has led to one child attending more of their health appointments.

Children's attendance at school is mixed. Staff advocate for children to have an education provision, and they escalate any issues to the local authority and the virtual school. The staff are proactive in providing educational activities for children and work with the multi-agency team where there are concerns about education attendance. For one child, the staff found a creative solution to help them to sit exams at the home.

Children are able to participate in a range of activities according to their likes and interests. When they decline to get involved in activities, staff will continue to encourage them. This gives children the opportunity to have new experiences.

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

Children's risk assessments are kept up to date. Individual risks are clear and include a history of concerns and details of incidents. This makes it easier for staff to see patterns and changes in children's behaviours. There is a clear action plan for staff to follow to help them identify triggers and put interventions in place to reduce risk. This helps staff to keep children safer.

When children go missing from home, staff know how to respond. Staff work together to ensure that children return home safely. When children return to the home, they are offered a warm welcome and support from staff. This is then followed up through the manager reviewing any triggers and staff carrying out key-work sessions. This has led to a reduction in missing-from-care incidents for children.

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and are proactive in working with children regarding a range of subjects relevant to their individual risks. They carry out

educational work with children and identify further support from outside agencies to help reduce risks. This ensures that children get the support they need. For one child, this has led to a reduction in self-harm.

Positive behaviour is encouraged at the home. Staff understand each child's needs. When required, they use consequences that are proportionate. When consequences are used, the children's views are sought, and they are provided with an opportunity to make amends to reduce the consequence. This helps children to understand and adhere to boundaries at the home.

Staff did not follow the safeguarding procedure or alert management to an allegation immediately. The child was not spoken to at the time of the incident. The manager acted promptly once informed and followed the safeguarding procedures. The child was offered support, and a full investigation took place. This was promptly followed up with additional learning for the full team and reflective discussions with staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is ambitious for the children and has high expectations for the care the children receive. Staff members spoke highly of the management team and praised the support and commitment from them. This creates a positive culture at the home, where staff provide a consistent, nurturing environment for children.

The manager has an effective audit process that provides her with good oversight of the areas for development and strengths at the home. There is a clear action plan that is followed through and communicated to staff in team meetings and supervision sessions. This helps to improve standards of care and outcomes for children.

Staff benefit from regular and reflective supervision sessions. They say that they feel supervision is supportive and helps them in their role. The manager provides effective oversight and challenge where required. This learning culture means that staff continue to develop the skills that they need to support children.

The manager builds effective relationships with multi-agency professionals. Leaders and managers are proactive in escalating issues and advocating on behalf of the children. One professional said, 'Staff advocate for their child well and put effort in to getting to know and understand them.' Another professional said, 'If there is an issue, staff provide a good level of professional challenge.' This helps children to get the right support in a timely manner.

There is an effective response to safeguarding concerns and allegations. The manager works well with the multi-agency team and undertakes a full investigation. However, on one occasion, the manager did not notify Ofsted of a child protection investigation being initiated. Information was provided on conclusion of the investigation. However, this prevented the regulator from having oversight of safeguarding concerns in a timely manner.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated. (Regulation 40 (4)(d)(i))	20 August 2025

Recommendation

- Children must be listened to and enabled to report any allegations at the earliest opportunity. Staff should report any allegation of abuse immediately to a senior manager within the home. Any allegation of harm or abuse must be addressed in line with the home's child protection policy ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.17)

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: SC442886

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Registered provider address: Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton on Tees
TS18 1TW

Responsible individual: Debra Farrow

Registered manager: Maria Clayton

Inspector

Natalie Clark, Social Care Inspector

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