

SC456710

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 care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2025.

Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspector spoke to one of the children.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 January 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: 10 September 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2025	Full	Inadequate
01/10/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/07/2023	Full	Good
16/08/2022	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide children with a warm and welcoming home. Children are encouraged to get involved with deciding how the home is decorated. Furthermore, staff support children to personalise their bedrooms, which reflect their likes and individual personalities. This helps children develop a sense of belonging.

Children's health and emotional wellbeing are a priority for staff. When children have needed additional support for their emotional health staff have quickly referred to relevant external services. One health professional said, 'Staff are intuitive and understand the children's needs, they are quick to get in touch if they need support for children.'

Not all children are attending full-time education. However, staff work well with professionals and advocate for children to have alternative learning opportunities to help them make progress. Feedback from education professionals is positive about how staff work with them. This has helped one child to engage in education daily, which is significant progress from their starting point.

The manager carefully considers children who may come to live in the home, to ensure that all their needs can be met. When there have been concerns identified between children living in the home, the manager has reviewed and agreed on plans to reduce the impact children have on each other. One child who is moving out of the home has a carefully thought-out transition, which has included family and getting to know the staff and other children in their new home. This is helping to prepare the child for their move.

Children are not fully equipped with the skills they need as they move into adulthood. Staff help children learn how to carry out tasks such as buying shopping and preparing meals. However, there is limited evidence of staff assisting children in developing skills that are essential for managing their finances and running a home. This could leave children feeling anxious and vulnerable when living independently.

Staff offer regular activities for children to participate in. One child has made positive progress through spending time enjoying new activities such as martial arts. However, staff are not persistent in their efforts to encourage all children to get involved in activities linked to their likes and interests. This hinders some children's opportunities to socialise and gain new experiences.

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

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and how to respond. Children's safety plans reflect their individual needs and risks. All incidents of concern are discussed in staff supervision sessions and during team meetings. This ensures that all staff are aware of what is expected of them to keep children safe.

Discussions take place regularly with children to help them understand risks, such as those associated with relationships and misusing drugs. Staff educate children to help them understand their individual risks and provide them with the knowledge they need to make safer choices. This has helped children share their feelings with staff and led to a reduction in incidents.

The manager takes appropriate steps to investigate and address concerns about children's care. However, on one occasion, when a child shared information with staff, the concerns were not escalated to the manager. This prevented the incident from being addressed quickly and having timely conversations with the child to explore their views around the concern.

There has been a reduction in children going missing from the home. Staff are pro-active and they follow children to encourage them to return home when they have concerns for their safety. They inform the relevant authorities and children's family members. Staff have discussions with children to understand why they have gone missing from home. However, staff are not consistent in their practice to make sufficient attempts to discourage children from leaving the home when there have been concerns about where they may be going.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager and deputy are committed to improving the care for children in the home. They understand the strengths and areas for development and have worked tirelessly to implement positive changes. They are ambitious for the future of the home and want to continuously improve the care they provide to the children.

Staff say they feel supported by leaders and managers. There is a new approach being embedded where staff are supported through a mentoring system, that helps both newer and experienced members of staff review the support they provide to children. Additionally, consultations are offered by a therapeutic practitioner to further enhance staff knowledge. This is helping staff better understand children's needs and respond to them in the right way.

Leaders and managers use monitoring audits effectively. Team meetings are held regularly, where the findings from audits are shared with staff. The manager celebrates good practice and identifies areas of development. This has helped the staff to develop their skills and improve the care children receive.

Staff receive regular, reflective practice-related supervision. The supervision records are comprehensive and show that the staff reflect on the children's progress and any incidents that take place. When there are concerns about staff practice this is followed up quickly and discussions are well recorded with clear actions. This helps staff learn and provide consistent care to children.

The manager and staff have strong working relationships with multi-agency professionals and parents. The staff communicate regularly with parents, social workers and education staff to make sure that the children's needs receive a consistent response. All professionals said that they have a good understanding of what is happening for their 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
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(iii))	5 March 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand that they have a responsibility to observe, notice and respond to children who are expressing their views, acknowledging that it is not the sole responsibility of the child to 'tell'. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)
- The registered person should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings. Each child's talents and interests should be understood with children selecting activities based on their personal preferences and abilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)
- The registered person should ensure staff take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on the individual child's needs and developmental stage about when to allow a child to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. Staff should be curious around where children are going and discouraging them from leaving when there may be concerns. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.7)

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: SC456710

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 managers: Kadie McGhee and Glyn Armstrong

Inspector

Natalie Clark, Social Care Inspector

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