

SC057718

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is operated by an independent organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to five children who may have emotional or social difficulties, physical disabilities or learning disabilities.

The home specialises in caring for children with autism spectrum conditions and additional complex needs.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified. She has been registered with Ofsted since June 2021.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 August 2023

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: 9 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/06/2022	Full	Good
24/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved on from the home and returned to live with their family. The child was living in the home under a shared care arrangement with his family. However, the manager no longer felt that they could continue to support the child and meet their needs. Staff ensured that the move for the child was a positive experience.

All children attend school. They receive full-time specialist education, which meets their needs. Staff are ambitious for children. They support children to work towards their educational targets. As a result of this, children are making progress from their starting points.

Staff use a range of communication tools to support children to express their views, wishes and feelings. A social worker said, 'Staff have been teaching [Name of child] to use makaton. This has helped them to learn simple signs to communicate what they want.'

Staff support children to develop their independence and life skills. They carry out regular direct work with children in the form of key-worker sessions. Each session is individual and practical, which allows children to explore and learn. One child can now change his bedding and load the washing machine with minor prompting.

Staff are helping to support one young adult to prepare to move into adult services. Several placements were found. However, the local authority decided that these placements were no longer viable choices. The manager is collaborating closely with professionals to identify a suitable placement.

Children take part in social activities, inside and outside of the home. Staff support them to explore their individual hobbies and interests. Children have access to lots of toys and games in the home. They also have access to a large, soft play sensory room, including a purpose-built garden. Children were seen during the inspection playing and having fun with staff.

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

There have been occasions when staff have had to physically intervene. This has only occurred when children have been at risk of harming themselves or others. The use of these measures has been recorded, and they are detailed and clear. The manager reviews all records and can identify any learning outcomes to support the development of staff. Children are supported to share their feelings after these events with individualised communication tools.

Investigations into allegations are responded to appropriately and are managed fairly, quickly, and in line with statutory guidance. When investigations take place,

these are completed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. Learning outcomes are identified and actions are quickly implemented. As a result of this, additional training has been completed and staff safeguarding practice has improved.

The manager and staff know children's risks and understand them. Together, they identify and appropriately assess new risks for children. The manager ensures that risk management plans are individualised and up to date. They are clear and directive. However, the manager has not fully considered the risks or impact associated with a young adult living in the home.

Safe recruitment and health and safety practice at the home mean that only the most suitable staff work at the home and that it is a safe place for children to live. Children and staff regularly practise evacuating the building in case of a fire. Therefore, everyone knows how to respond in an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager leads by example. She is confident and ambitious for children. She has high expectations for the staff team and staff development, and is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. As a result of this, the staff work together to provide a consistent and stable home for children.

The manager is organised and ensures that staff training is regular and up to date. All staff have completed mandatory training and other training that meets the needs of children. Children are cared for by an experienced staff team and most staff are qualified.

Staff receive regular supervision. Supervisions are well planned, structured and reflective. Those staff who receive supervision do so with a suitably experienced manager or supervisor. Staff receive annual appraisals. These are equally reflective, and they focus on staff development and practice. However, they do not contain feedback from children and professionals.

The manager nurtures positive working relationships with professionals, including parents and family members. The manager understands the importance of effective partnership working. This contributes towards children's positive experiences in the home. One parent commented, 'I couldn't ask for a better place for [Name of child] to live in. I have a really good relationship with the manager and staff, they are very reassuring.'

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

- The registered person should ensure that when a child turns 18 and continues to live in the home, there should be a clear and robust risk management plan in place. The plan should contain clear strategies to support staff to manage and reduce risk. This plan should also be regularly reviewed, taking into consideration children's additional needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should include the views of the children and other professionals when completing appraisals with staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC057718

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Together Trust

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

Responsible individual: Jill Sheldrake

Registered manager: Joanne Grime

Inspector

Kimmy Feeley, Social Care Inspector

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