

2593032

Registered provider: Smoothstone Care and Education Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is registered to care for three children who may have learning disabilities.

Since the last inspection, one young person has moved out of the home and one child has moved in. There were two people living in the home at the time of the inspection. Both children were seen and spoken to by the inspector.

The manager is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 March 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: 22 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2024	Full	Good
29/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
14/04/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive individualised bespoke care. Staff know children well and understand what is important to them. Children's personalities, characters and voices permeate through their care plans. Staff create a familial environment and spend time with children, such as preparing meals and eating as a family. Children therefore feel cared for and have a sense of belonging.

Children do well in education considering their starting points. The manager and staff communicate effectively with teachers, ensuring coordinated care. When children are unable to attend school full time, staff are creative in engaging them in home learning. For example, one child on a reduced timetable is helped to learn through fun educational activities at home and in the community.

Children enjoy good health. Staff prepare and support children to attend medical appointments. Children with more complex health needs receive specialist support. For example, one child with a vision impairment has received specialist support in building independent life skills and adaptations. This helps to enhance children's life chances and experiences. Children's emotional and mental wellbeing is also well supported. For example, staff have daily conversations with children about their feelings and emotions and one child is receiving therapeutic life story work.

Staff support children's transitions well. Moves in and out of the home are carefully considered and planned. Children are prepared through visits and creative mediums such as a voice book, helping children to get to know the staff; how they look and sound before moving in. Children's bedrooms are prepared in their chosen décor. This helps children feel comfortable and settle quickly.

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

Staff keep children safe. Staff know the risks children can be exposed to. Safety plans are reviewed regularly and tell staff how to respond. Staff receive enhanced safeguarding training in relation to caring for children with learning disabilities, helping to strengthen safeguarding practice.

Staff are competent in responding to behaviours that are difficult to manage, such as physical aggression. Staff implement firm boundaries with empathy and understanding. Children benefit from consistent routines, and systems of rewards and incentives encourage children to make positive choices.

Staff physically intervene as a last resort to keep children and others safe. The least restrictive measure or force is used. Children and staff are spoken to afterwards to support their wellbeing. The manager reviews each event, and learning is used to better support children, improve practice and prevent further incidents.

The manager regularly reviews the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the home. However, there is a lack of evidence of consultation with relevant external professionals or agencies. This is a missed opportunity to reduce risk and to fully review the home's location.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is dedicated and committed to helping children to reach their full potential. She sets high expectations for staff and leads by example. The manager communicates effectively and works in collaboration with other professionals. She is a strong advocate for children and ensures decisions made are in children's best interests.

Staff are well trained. Staff receive training in relation to children's specific needs such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, pathological demand avoidance and autism spectrum disorder.

The manager has effective oversight and quality assurance systems in place. She knows what is happening in the home daily. Regular internal and external audits are undertaken. Any shortfalls are promptly addressed. Feedback from external stakeholders and learning from incidents is used to improve the service. This helps to maintain good standards of care.

The manager regularly reviews the service and reports on the care and progress of children. However, the review lacks some of the required information such as the actions and areas of focus for the subsequent reporting period.

Staff receive regular supervision. This includes pertinent topics such as the care of children and safeguarding concerns. However, they do not enable staff to engage in reflective discussions around how their own feelings and behaviour are affected in their day-to-day role with children. This is an area for development.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practise from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61 paragraph 13.2)

This recommendation was made at the last inspection and is restated.

- The registered person should ensure that they consult with relevant professional when they conduct the annual review of premises. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 15.1)

This recommendation was made at the last inspection and is restated.

- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

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: 2593032

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Smoothstone Care & Education Limited

Registered provider address: Datum House, Electra Way, Crewe CW1 6ZF

Responsible individual: Raymond Scales

Registered manager: Alison Harris

Inspector

Emma Dacres, Social Care Inspector

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