

1159884

Registered provider: Spark Of Genius North East LLP

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private company. It provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

There were four children resident at the time of the inspection, and the inspector spoke to them all.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2025.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 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: 10 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

An assurance inspection took place on 11 December 2024. At the inspection, serious and widespread concerns were found. As a result, two compliance notices were issued under regulations 12 and 27, and a restriction of accommodation notice was served. A monitoring visit took place on 28 January 2025, where the inspector found that the compliance notice in relation to regulation 27 was met but the compliance notice under regulation 12 was reissued. A further monitoring visit took place on 3

March 2025, where the inspector found that the provider had met the remaining compliance notice in relation to regulation 12.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2024	Full	Good
22/08/2023	Full	Good
15/02/2023	Full	Good
24/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is bright, homely and welcoming to the children. The walls have photos of the children displayed, and one child's art is proudly wall mounted for all to see. This helps children develop a sense of belonging.

Each child's move into the home is well planned. The manager involves staff in the decision-making and planning. Children visit the home and spend time getting to know the staff and other children. This helps the children to develop relationships with those in the home before moving in.

Children are making good academic progress from their starting point. One child has completed their exams and secured a college placement. Another child has more than doubled their attendance at school. When children are not in school, staff support children to continue with their learning while staff work with education professionals to source an appropriate school placement. Staff ensure that children follow a consistent morning routine that helps them to be prepared for their return to school.

All children are developing age-appropriate skills that they will need to care for themselves as they approach adulthood. Children learn new skills, such as cooking and doing their own laundry. Children are supported by staff to further develop their ability to care for themselves in an area of the home with its own living area, bathroom and bedroom. This helps children build confidence in themselves in preparation for moving on.

Staff are interested in the children and listen to what they have to say. Children are involved in decision-making about their lives, and staff take time to explain the reasons for any decisions and ensure that they do the things they say they will do. This has helped children to develop trust in staff.

Children are making progress and having a positive experience. Memories of activities and special events are captured in a colourful and detailed monthly newsletter. This provides a valuable record of children's time in the home for them to keep.

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

Children have up-to-date risk assessments and care plans. Staff have been particularly effective in establishing strong and trusting relationships with children in a short space of time. This has been essential in helping children to understand their emotions and behaviour and to find safe coping strategies. This has led one child to significantly reduce their cannabis use.

The manager and staff make the home a welcoming and fun place, where children want to be. As a result, children are opting to spend time at home with each other. This has led to fewer incidents of children going missing from home, and therefore, the risk of exploitation for two children has reduced.

Staff have a good understanding of what leads children to harm themselves, and staff support children to use different strategies to better manage their difficult feelings. As a result of this, one child's self-harm is reducing, and they now turn to staff for help.

Children know and understand the rules and boundaries. When children struggle to manage their emotions appropriately, staff help them to discuss how they are feeling and how this impacts on their behaviour. This is effective in reducing their feelings of anger and aggression in the home, and children say that the home is a calmer place to live.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a new leadership and management team in place since the inspection. A qualified and experienced registered manager is now in post. Practice within the home has improved, and the previous shortfalls have been addressed.

The manager has effective monitoring and review systems in place. This helps him to maintain good oversight of the home and identify the strengths and areas for improvement. The manager is also able to track the progress of children and review any patterns or trends in relation to their risks and behaviours. The manager is working through a development plan to continue to improve practice in the home.

The manager is supported by an experienced assistant manager, and they lead a team that is enthusiastic and has high aspirations for the children. Staff say they feel valued, and they enjoy their work.

The manager and staff have developed positive working relationships with partner agencies. Those positive relationships are effective in helping staff and professionals to work together to promote good care and consistency for children. Professionals speak positively about the quality of care provided to the children. One professional stated that the staff in the home have supported them to improve their own understanding of the child and to build a good relationship with them.

Staff supervision is not taking place in line with the organisation's policy, and there are significant gaps for some staff. Staff who have been in the home for longer have not had their annual appraisal. This limits the manager's oversight of individual practice and reduces opportunities to address staff's learning needs.

Staff are not consistently recording information in a way that is helpful to children. The wording in some documents, including records of staff meetings, does not match

the caring language used by staff on a day-to-day basis. This does not help children to understand their experiences in a positive way.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that a review of the quality of care has been completed for over 12 months. Consequently, they have been unable to share that report with Ofsted and other relevant agencies. This limits leaders and managers in gaining a good understanding of the impact that practice in the home has on the experiences and progress of children. It also prevents them from understanding what needs to improve and how those improvements will be achieved. Furthermore, it also prevents Ofsted from maintaining adequate oversight of the impact that the standard of care has on 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 registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. (Regulation 45 (1) (3) (4)(a)(b))	29 August 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that systems are in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive regular supervision. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way, and information about the child must always be recorded in a

way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 60, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1159884

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Spark Of Genius North East LLP

Registered provider address: King Edwin School, Mill Lane, Stockton-on-Tees,
Cleveland TS20 1LG

Responsible individual: Mark Proffitt

Registered manager: Paul Tillotson

Inspector

Lisa Gordon, Social Care Inspector

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