

2624251

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Assurance 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 three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home. The inspector spoke with one child.

There have been changes in the manager since the last inspection. One manager has newly registered with Ofsted since 5 November 2025. The other two managers are not currently in work.

Inspection date: 2 December 2025

Date of last inspection: 16 September 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

Ofsted did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

A suitably qualified and experienced manager, and a successful recruitment campaign, ensure that there is a consistent staff team. Leaders and managers provide a supportive work environment, with regular practice-related supervision and time for staff to reflect on their practice. Children are cared for by familiar staff, who say they are happy at work.

The two children living in the home have trusting relationships with staff. Staff take time to help children understand how they feel. They discuss sensitive subjects with children, supporting them to develop positive self-image. Children say they trust staff and like living in the home.

The manager carries out a thorough assessment and carefully considers all new requests for children to live in the home. Staff contribute to the decision-making and planning. The manager accesses prompt training, where needed, to ensure that staff are equipped to meet the child's needs, before they move to the home.

The manager has an effective process for monitoring and reviewing the quality of care and staff practice. They understand what the team's strengths and areas for development are. The manager is implementing an action plan to improve practice in the home.

Educational progress for children is mixed. One child attends school consistently. Staff provide structured daily routines that prepare the children for the day ahead. However, the effect of this on one child's access to education is yet to be seen.

Staff have the time and space to read and understand children's care plans and risk assessments. Staff plan targeted work to support children in reducing risk. Since the last inspection, staff have completed training on behaviour management. However, work continues with staff to embed their learning from this training. Therefore, staff have yet to demonstrate that their learning has improved their behaviour management practice. As a result, the requirement issued at the last inspection under regulation 11, the positive relationships standard, has been restated.

All other requirements from the last inspection have been met. However, one recommendation regarding education has been reissued.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/09/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/02/2025	Full	Good
07/08/2023	Full	Good
01/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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

Statutory requirements

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

Requirement	Due date
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;	30 January 2026

are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.
(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi))

This requirement is restated.

Recommendation

- The registered persons should ensure that the necessary support is given to children to enable them to access their education or training. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.13)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2624251

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Registered provider address: Fostering & Adoption Team, Spectrum 8, Spectrum Business Park, Seaham SR7 7TT

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered managers: Cheryl Bearpark, Michaela Myers and Amy Philbin-Robinson

Inspector

Lisa Gordon, Social Care Inspector

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