

2682299

Registered provider: North East Autism Society

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation and is governed by a board of trustees.

The home can care for up to four children with emotional and social difficulties. The home may also provide care for children with either a learning disability or a mental condition. The home may also provide care for one child with a physical disability and one child with sensory impairments.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2024.

There were four children living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspector spoke to all the children during this inspection.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 9 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/12/2024	Full	Good
26/06/2023	Full	Good
20/03/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children thrive in this exceptionally happy, nurturing, and family-oriented home. Their presence is felt, seen, and celebrated throughout the environment. They enjoy living here, have fun, and make outstanding progress from their starting points. The unwavering commitment of staff significantly enhances children's life chances.

Children living in this home make exceptional progress across all areas of their development. They are actively involved in decisions about their lives, with leaders and staff consistently seeking and responding to their views using each child's preferred method of communication. This inclusive and respectful approach ensures that children feel heard and valued, promoting their confidence and sense of belonging.

Children's educational outcomes are significantly enhanced by the proactive and collaborative efforts of staff. Barriers to learning are swiftly identified and addressed through close partnership working with education professionals. Individualised education plans are implemented effectively, leading to demonstrable improvements in attendance, engagement, and achievement. For example, two children who were previously not in full-time education now attend school on a full-time basis and are actively engaging in their learning.

Children enjoy a wide range of enriching activities and opportunities. Staff use the home's resources and the wider community creatively to provide meaningful experiences that encourage exploration and personal growth. Every effort is made to support children in trying new things, which broadens their opportunities and nurtures their curiosity.

Children make remarkable progress in communication and emotional development. One child, previously assessed as having limited speech, has developed significantly in spoken language within seven months of living at the home.

Children form strong, trusting relationships with staff. They instinctively seek out intensive interactions that reinforce their sense of identity and emotional security. Staff provide consistent emotional warmth and affection, which children respond to positively and with enthusiasm.

The home environment is warm, welcoming, and tailored to meet individual needs. Adaptations have been made to support children with complex health and mobility challenges. The setting promotes independence and ensures that every child feels respected and empowered.

Staff are sensitive and creative in supporting children to maintain relationships with those who are important to them. For instance, one child was recently supported to attend a family wedding, creating a valuable and memorable experience for both the child and their family.

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

Children are kept safe due to the outstanding care and support provided by staff. Safeguarding is embedded in the culture of the home, and children benefit from a highly protective and nurturing environment. On the rare occasion that a safeguarding concern arises, the manager acts swiftly and collaboratively with external professionals to ensure that information is shared promptly and effectively. Known risks are addressed without delay, and learning from incidents is used to strengthen safeguards and improve practice.

Children do not go missing from this home, but plans are in place should it happen. Children's plans are reflective and thorough and give staff clear instructions of how to support them. They are kept under regular review and staff understand and follow them.

Medication is managed with precision and care. Staff are well-trained, understand the medication policy thoroughly, and administer medicines safely and confidently. Children's health needs are well understood, and staff advocate effectively on their behalf. They are attuned to children's presentation and show curiosity when behaviours change, ensuring timely access to specialist services that support both emotional and physical well-being.

Physical intervention is used as a last resort to protect children from harm. When necessary, interventions are proportionate and followed by reflective discussions with both staff and children. This ensures that practice remains safe, appropriate, and focused on learning and improvement.

Comprehensive and dynamic care plans are in place for each child. These are regularly updated and discussed in team meetings, ensuring that all staff have current, detailed guidance on how to support children and mitigate risks. Staff's deep knowledge of the children is evident in their day-to-day practice, which consistently reduces and minimises risks.

There are no concerns about bullying in the home. Staff provide individualised support to help children understand appropriate social interactions. As a result, children enjoy positive peer relationships and often choose to engage in shared activities, fostering a sense of belonging.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced and committed manager, supported by a recently appointed senior staff member. Together, they demonstrate a clear and ambitious vision that is shared across the team. Their high expectations are consistently communicated and understood, resulting in measurable improvements in children's progress and the overall quality of care.

Monitoring and quality assurance systems are robust and effective. The manager has a clear understanding of daily practice in the home and uses internal and external audits to identify patterns, trends, and areas for improvement. Any shortfalls are addressed promptly, ensuring that the quality of care remains consistently high.

Staff are confident, motivated, and well supported in their roles. They actively engage with learning opportunities provided by the manager, and bespoke training is delivered to staff to help them meet the evolving needs of the children. This ensures that staff are well-equipped to deliver high-quality, responsive care.

Supervision sessions and team meetings are used effectively to facilitate open and honest dialogue between staff and the manager. Children's emerging needs or key topics are embedded through focused discussions and reflective practice during team meetings. The involvement of specialist practitioners in team meetings further enhances staff knowledge and supports the provider's model of care.

Multi-agency working is strong. The manager and staff maintain positive and effective relationships with external professionals and children's family members. Communication is consistently praised by professionals, contributing to a collaborative approach that supports children's progress and well-being.

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: 2682299

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North East Autism Society

Registered provider address: 15 Lumley Court, Drum Industrial Estate, Chester le Street, County Durham DH2 1AN

Responsible individual: Brian Stoker

Registered manager: Rae Markham

Inspector

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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