

2728373

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated and managed by a local authority. It provides short-term care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and who are transitioning from a secure setting back into the community.

There is no registered manager. The acting manager is applying to register with Ofsted.

One child was living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 June 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 25 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/02/2024	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The inspector spoke with the child during the inspection.

The home has been refurbished and provides a warm and welcoming environment for children. The child in the home said they are very proud to call it home.

Staff have supported the child to have a well-planned transition into the home. This included opportunities to establish relationships with staff before moving in. The child said getting to know the staff made the move a positive experience. This helps children to have trusting relationships from the beginning and make good progress as a result.

One child has moved on from the home since the last inspection. Although this move was at short-notice, staff made efforts to maintain communication and minimise the impact such a move can have on children.

Staff make efforts to encourage the child to attend education and ensure that they access the right resources to support their needs. Additionally, children are encouraged to complete age-appropriate tasks. This helps to develop their independence and resilience outside of the home.

Children have opportunities to engage in community-based activities and have enjoyable experiences with the staff. For example, the child in the home has washed cars to raise money for a theme-park trip. This helps children to develop a sense of responsibility and achievement.

Staff understand the health needs of children. They are tenacious in their approach and take steps to overcome any barriers children may experience. This ensures that children access the right care and attention in a timely manner to keep them healthy.

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

Following a challenging period, staff have been supported to reflect on their practice and given opportunities for further training. They have focused on their approach to managing risk and prepared for the next child moving to the home. This has helped the team to develop a consistent approach to meeting children's needs.

Staff understand children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. The acting manager has made improvements to the way plans and risk assessments are written and reviewed. This means that staff have the right guidance to help them keep children safe. Furthermore, staff have regular constructive conversations with the children about the worries they have for them. As a result, children understand the impact of risks on themselves and others. This helps children to identify risk and understand what they need to do to keep themselves safe.

Professionals speak highly of the care given at the home. One professional said, 'The most important thing they do is treat [name of child] with trust and respect. This has allowed [name of child] to feel safe and valued.' This approach has helped to reduce the risks for this child.

When incidents of children going missing from care occur, staff follow agreed protocols to locate and return children safely to the home. Discussions then take place with children to allow them to reflect on potentially unsafe situations and increased risks of harm from being missing from home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There has been a change of management in the home. There is an experienced acting manager in post. Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have taken action to address most shortfalls.

The record of a serious incident involving a child who has moved on from the home lacks detail of how staff responded and how physical intervention was used. Furthermore, shortfalls in oversight after this have not been identified by leaders and managers. As a result, there have been missed opportunities to analyse and understand the effectiveness of staff's practice when times are more challenging. Although there has been some reflection, lessons learned at a management and senior level are not yet clearly defined about how a similar situation would be avoided in the future.

The acting manager has made improvements to monitoring systems. The manager has devised a clear plan for the way she wants to run the home and help the team to develop. This includes building support networks with the managers of the provider's other children's homes to share good practice. Although improvements have been identified, they are yet to be fully embedded in the home.

The new management arrangements have promoted stability and a sense of accountability in the team. Furthermore, the manager provides regular constructive feedback to staff about their work. Staff said they feel valued in their roles and more confident in their abilities. One staff member said that the team works better together now, and this has led to a positive feeling in the home.

Staff now receive regular practice-related supervision sessions. One staff member said that there is now clear direction and purpose in their interactions with the manager. This helps them feel more involved in decision-making in the home. Team morale and staff resilience have been strengthened as a result.

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

Statutory requirements

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

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h))	6 August 2025

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: 2728373

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: Martyn Stenton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Mark Cryer, Social Care Inspector

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