

2777607

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority. It provides care for up to 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in April 2024.

Two children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector spoke with both children.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

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: 7 October 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/10/2025	Full	Outstanding
17/12/2024	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children receive excellent care from staff who know them well. Secure relationships allow children to speak openly about their worries. Staff support children to improve and maintain good health. Consistent routines and boundaries support children to make progress in all areas of their lives.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective and staff work proactively with other agencies to understand and reduce risks. Children feel safe and trust the adults caring for them. Staff promote children's understanding of their emotions.

Management oversight is robust and consistent. Staff are encouraged to develop their skills and are proud of their achievements.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have lived at the home for nearly 2 years and are thriving. Staff know the children and their needs exceptionally well. Children's plans are detailed and reviewed regularly by the team. Staff maintain strong routines and structures, which help children to feel secure and build trust in staff. Children openly share their concerns and any worries with staff.

Staff promote children having the right education placements and work well with professionals to understand children's behaviours. Children's attendance at school is excellent. Education professionals said that staff interventions help children to make progress in their learning. One education professional said, 'Communication is excellent; it's what helps us work so well together.'

Children make improvements in their health and wellbeing as a result of living at the home. Staff target important areas of children's health and encourage them to meet their own health needs. Where there are worries, staff work effectively to understand needs. They involve and challenge health professionals to ensure that children receive the right care in a timely manner.

Relationships in the home are well managed. Staff recognise the children's need for independence from one another. Activities are planned in a way that promotes individuality while allowing for time together. This thoughtful planning has led to an improvement in children's relationships with each other.

Staff help children to try new activities and develop long-term hobbies. This encouragement to explore new interests helps children to make new friendships and social networks. This leads to improvements in children's physical health, confidence and self-esteem.

Staff encourage children to learn age-appropriate life skills at a pace that is right for them. Independence work is well planned, thorough and engaging. Children learn social responsibility and valuable skills to help them negotiate their lives after moving on from the home.

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

Children said that they feel safe and happy living at the home. Staff have a strong understanding of children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. Staff lead supportive discussions with children to help them understand their own emotions and behaviours. This equips children with important skills to help them communicate their feelings to staff.

Children's safety plans are detailed and give staff the information they need to keep children safe and help children to identify how to keep themselves safe. When the team agrees strategies to help children, the manager thoroughly evaluates them to measure their success. This helps staff to embed safeguarding practices and improves their effectiveness.

When there is a need for staff to physically restrain children to keep them safe, children and staff are spoken to afterwards to help everyone understand why the holds were necessary. Children are supported to link emotions to behaviours. Physical interventions have reduced because of this prevention work. One professional said, 'Staff are excellent at pre-empting and preventing anxiety in children.'

When there are allegations against staff, the manager's response is thorough, includes all relevant professionals and helps to identify reasons for the allegation. Learning is taken from such incidents. Children are helped to repair relationships and understand the outcomes of investigations.

When serious incidents occur, the manager and staff work proactively to help external agencies understand children's needs and behaviours. This promotes professionals' understanding of children's needs and improves responses to keep them safe both at the home and in the community.

Children rarely go missing from home. Despite this rarity, staff understand how to respond and follow agreed protocols. When one child left the home, staff's responses led to the child being returned safely. The child was encouraged to talk about this experience and there have been no further missing-from-home incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the home. There is a strong learning culture, and the manager constantly strives to develop the home further. She has a clear vision for how she wants the home to run and inspires the same values in the staff team. Staff speak highly of the manager and are proud of the home and the team. One member of staff said, 'The support, guidance and knowledge shared by

management, leaders, colleagues and, most importantly, the young people themselves, have helped me grow both personally and professionally.'

Management oversight is exceptionally strong and leads to an improved understanding of the team. When the manager identifies any shortfalls in staff practice or development, she responds quickly to support staff. This helps staff to be clear about what is expected of them and drives forward improvements.

The manager is aspirational for what children and staff can achieve. She has devised a programme which aims to develop the skills of staff. This has been implemented in the wider organisation. This development of the team as professionals has led to staff taking on more-senior opportunities.

When the manager identifies any shortfalls in professionals' responses to children's needs, she offers appropriate challenge. This helps children to access the right services at the right time for them. Professionals hold the manager in high regard and are clear about the progress that children have made as a result of living at the home.

Staff receive regular and thoroughly structured supervisions, which allow them to reflect and develop their own practice. Team meetings and development days bring staff together to discuss all aspects of the children's care. Staff relate care planning to relevant training and research. This informs their approach to children's care and gives them a strong sense of purpose in their roles.

No requirements or recommendations were raised following this inspection.

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: 2777607

Provider: Durham County Council

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Courtney Good

Inspector

Mark Cryer, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2026