

2802997

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 by a local authority. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. Inspectors spoke with and observed all three children during the inspection.

The home and manager registered with Ofsted in August 2024.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 November 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	outstanding
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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: 18 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2025	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children experience well-planned introductions to living at the home. Staff take the time to understand the children's needs and goals. This helps children to have positive beginnings at the home and to build trusting relationships with staff. Staff speak about children with warmth and high regard and are proud of the progress they have made. One staff member said of the children, 'They are truly remarkable individuals, and I am committed to being a positive role model for them, helping them build confidence and resilience for their future.'

Children have settled exceptionally well at the home and made excellent progress as a result. For example, one child has made a significant improvement in their ability to recognise and manage their emotions. Staff understand the importance of routine and structure and are skilled at promoting these in the lives of the children. This means that children have a clear understanding of expectations and boundaries, and this is helping them to thrive.

School life is promoted as a vital part of children's lives, and children attend school regularly. When children experience barriers to school attendance, staff ensure that children have full access to a broad range of educational activities. This keeps children focused on learning so they do not miss out on opportunities to continuously gain valuable knowledge.

Children's confidence has increased since moving to the home through having access to a broad range of hobbies and interests. Staff consistently encourage children to take part in new experiences and try new activities. This has developed children's physical well-being and self-esteem. Furthermore, staff compile photos of the children enjoying activities into beautiful, individually designed memory books. This enriches the children's memories of their time living at the home.

Staff have a deep understanding of the children's health needs and help them to meet important milestones. Children's diet and health have improved. One child has been helped to address diet-related concerns, and this has resulted in medication no longer being needed. Children make healthy choices and take part in age-appropriate life skill activities that have helped them to develop a sense of personal responsibility.

Staff advocate enthusiastically for children's wishes and help them to share their views. Children's meetings take place regularly and are well attended by children and staff. Meeting records include child-focused feedback from each child. This allows the children to contribute to the running of the home and have influence in their care.

Staff positively promote cultural awareness with all children. This includes themed nights and visits to places of cultural significance. Staff take time with this work and

engage children in meaningful discussions to further develop their insight about social differences. This enables the children to have a diverse range of experiences, enriching their understanding of the world.

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

Children say they feel safe living at the home. They experience individualised therapeutic care in a safe and homely environment. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's triggers that lead to unwanted behaviour and respond positively to keep children safe. Children have established strong and trusting relationships with staff as a result. Unwanted behaviours have significantly decreased for all children since they moved to the home. One professional said, 'Before moving to the home, [name of child] had lots of behaviours linked to big emotions and rejection. Now [name of child] is thriving, a happy child who smiles all the time.'

Risk assessments are clearly written, regularly reviewed and contain all necessary information to guide staff practice. Staff know and understand the children's histories and past experiences. This enables them to contextualise behaviours and respond effectively to keep children safe. Staff lead sensitive and individualised discussions with children to help them identify risks and increase their understanding of safety.

Staff use physical intervention as a last resort to keep children safe from harm. The rationale for holding children is clearly described in well-written records. The manager ensures that discussions take place with staff and children following such events. This helps children to reflect on and learn from their experiences. It also supports staff to adapt their approach and remain responsive to the children's needs.

Children do not go missing from the home. Risk assessments and safety plans clearly describe the actions staff should take if children were to be missing. This means staff are well prepared and remain vigilant to keep children safe.

Staff work in collaboration with other professionals to manage risks when there are concerns for children. They have worked with professionals to identify and refer to specialist support services. This means risks can be explored and understood, and this contributes to strengthening safety planning that has helped to reduce risks for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is aspirational for what children and staff can achieve. She is assisted by a knowledgeable deputy, and together, they have a strong, visible presence in the home. The manager's detailed understanding of the team's strengths and her vision for the home inspire the staff to perform at their best for children. The quality of her guidance ensures that staff know what is expected of them, and they proudly strive to make a difference to the children's lives.

The manager fosters innovative, sensitive and age-appropriate practice that is aligned to the children's individual needs. The team's therapeutically informed approach to care is strongly evidenced throughout all records and the care children experience. Staff greatly benefit from a supportive learning culture. Practice is strengthened with research-informed guidance, which is well received by staff.

Staff receive regular high-quality, practice-related supervisions. Team meetings take place regularly, and staff are encouraged to reflect on and agree consistent approaches to the care of the children. Staff regularly discuss children's well-being and care plans and say their opinions are welcomed and valued.

The manager uses monitoring tools effectively to have thorough oversight of the home and staff. When she identifies any shortfalls in practice, she addresses these comprehensively and in a timely manner. This has led to improvements in practice and means that staff have significant accountability in their roles.

Professionals consistently speak highly of the manager and the team and the positive impact they have on the lives of the children. The manager maintains positive working relationships with all external professionals. This leads to effective and purposeful communication and care planning. Where there are shortfalls in professional responses to children, she escalates concerns appropriately with a strong focus on children's needs.

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: 2802997

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Registered provider address: Spectrum 8, Spectrum Business Park, Seaham SR7 7TT

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Nicole Spoors

Inspectors

Mark Cryer, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Jon Collins, Social Care Inspector

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