

SC000803

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider owns and manages the home. It provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There are two children living in the home. The inspector spoke with both children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2020.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 September 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	outstanding
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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: good



Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2025	Full	Good
27/02/2024	Full	Good
11/07/2022	Full	Good
09/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say they feel safe and are happy here. They have a sense of belonging and value the trusting relationships that they share with the staff. One child rated the home '5 stars', another said living in the home was '10/10' and a child who has moved on, referred to a staff member as 'like my second mam'. Professionals also share this positive view; one social worker commented that, '[Name of child]'s confidence has rocketed. I could not ask for better in terms of support'.

The manager and staff speak with warmth and pride about the children. They invest time in getting to know each child and developing a deep understanding of their needs. They hold aspirational expectations and encourage children to reach their potential, which has contributed to children making good progress in all areas of their lives.

Education is a particular area of achievement. Children who were previously disengaged from education, or unlikely to gain qualifications, have been supported to do so. Through careful liaison between the manager and college staff, children are well supported in accessing further education. In one case, this enabled a child to transition successfully from a specialist learning provision to a mainstream college.

Staff and the manager focus on preparing children for adulthood by equipping them with practical life skills. They work closely with professionals to encourage children to take responsibility for aspects of their own care, such as self-administering medication. This careful preparation helps ensure smooth transitions when children move on. One professional described the team as 'truly amazing' and praised their 'incredibly valuable' contribution in supporting a child's transition, attributing the success to the staff's deep understanding of children and their needs.

Staff respect and support children's identities and relationships. Children are encouraged to make new friendships and bring friends to the home to meet other children and staff. Staff and the manager also actively advocate for children to see their birth families and support children with family visits. These efforts help children to feel valued, maintain important relationships, and stay safe.

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

Staff and the manager have a strong understanding of children's vulnerabilities and the risks associated with them. They are quick to identify and respond to new or emerging risks. When concerns arise that children may be engaging in illegal activity, such as attempting to buy alcohol, the manager liaises effectively with external agencies and local businesses to disrupt unsafe behaviours and help keep children safe.

The manager and staff help children to develop greater awareness and take responsibility for their own safety. This includes supporting them to reflect on and learn from unsafe decisions, building resilience and understanding over time. Positive relationships underpin staff's management of children's behaviour. There have been no incidents of restraint, and sanctions are only used rarely. When sanctions are applied, the manager reviews their effectiveness. Where a sanction proves ineffective, he reflects with staff to identify alternative strategies that are more likely to support the child in learning from their behaviour.

Incidents of children going missing-from-home or returning home late have decreased. In these situations, staff work to maintain contact with children and make efforts to locate them. The manager liaises closely with families and implements disruption plans, which helps staff to find children quickly and safely.

There has been one complaint made by a child's family member since the previous inspection. This was managed promptly and effectively by the manager, resulting in a satisfactory resolution. The family member praised the high quality of care their child continues to receive.

Staff are aware, knowledgeable and remain alert to changes in children's behaviour. This has led to staff advocating for children to be assessed for conditions such as vitamin deficiencies, dyspraxia and ADHD. Such proactive responses not only ensure that children's individual needs are identified and met but also help children to feel cared for and valued.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager leads by example and demonstrates aspirational ambitions for the children in his care. He is deeply committed to providing high-quality care and sets high expectations for his staff team to be equally ambitious for the children they support.

The manager carefully evaluates whether staff have the necessary knowledge to meet each child's needs. When gaps are identified, he commissions training before the child moves in, ensuring staff are well equipped to understand and respond to those needs.

The manager works collaboratively with external professionals involved in supporting children. He invites them to staff meetings to strengthen the team's understanding of the support children receive and to ensure that their care complements the work of external agencies. Professionals consistently praise the quality of communication, particularly in sharing updates on children's needs and progress.

The manager is keen to support staff with their professional development. Staff report feeling exceptionally well supported and highly value the opportunities provided by the manager. This has contributed to a stable and motivated team. Through reflective supervision, the manager helps staff deepen their practice and develop their knowledge of the legislation underpinning children's care.



The manager's commitment to continual improvement is evident in the strengthened missing-from-home process he has introduced. This has since been adopted across the organisation's other homes due to its success in enabling staff to respond swiftly to risks.

The manager is innovative in his response to emerging safeguarding issues. Recognising the need for further tools to address risks associated with 'sexting,' the manager developed a resource that has since been adopted as a national framework.

The manager also demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive practice. He consistently challenges staff when language may be stigmatising or oppressive, reinforcing a culture of respect and dignity for all children.

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: SC000803

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Registered provider address: Peartree House, Bolam, Darlington, County Durham
DL2 2UP

Responsible individual: David Bartlett

Registered manager: Steven Sturman

Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

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