

SC000820

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

There were four children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2008.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 November 2024

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 19 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2024	Full	Good
01/11/2022	Full	Good
15/09/2021	Full	Good
08/10/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Most of the children have lived at the home for many years. The children form secure and trusted relationships with staff who listen and care for them. Children have their feelings interpreted by staff who advocate on their behalf. As a result, children now engage with life-story work and are helped to understand their history. This gives the children a sense of stability and well-being.

Children make good progress in different areas of their lives. For some, they experience stability for the first time in their lives. Professionals all spoke positively about the way children settle easily, respond to the boundaries and make positive changes due to the staff's nurturing care.

When children are due to leave out of the home, this is well-planned and children are prepared for the move, both practically and emotionally. An internal area of the home is used to promote the final steps of independence. Children learn essential life skills to support with their move. Children have a positive ending when they move out and staff remain in contact for as long as needed.

Children attend school and are making progress with their studies. Staff liaise with school daily and share any difficulties children may be experiencing. This helps teaching staff to understand how children may present in school during the day. There is a notable increase in children's school attainment compared with previous school placements. As a result, there has been success in children sitting their exams and gaining places on college courses.

Children are encouraged to try new experiences and pursue their own interests. Staff organise regular holidays so that children can enjoy spending time together. Children also enjoy a range of organised weekly hobbies and activities in their local community. When children find taking part in activities difficult, the staff support and motivate them to try new things. Because of this, the children have increased their confidence and have better relationships with their friends.

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

The children are safeguarded by staff who they trust and are confident in talking to them about their worries. These positive relationships with children increase the knowledge of children's behaviour and their perceptions of risk. When behaviours change, the manager updates the staff via staff meetings and supervision sessions. These steps ensure that the most up-to-date concerns are shared with staff in a timely way along with actions to help children stay safer.

Staff help children to understand the impact their behaviour has on themselves and others. For example, discussions related to bullying are focused on the impact and promote a culture of treating others with dignity and respect. As a result, the number of bullying incidents is low and children are happy in the home.

There have been no incidents of physical restraint or children involved in going missing from home. There are clear routines and boundaries in the home that children understand and follow. The staff work with children to help them recognise their emotions and find useful strategies when they become frustrated. This approach creates an environment that is predictable and stable for the children.

The staff are responsive to the risks posed to children by using the internet. When children are vulnerable to online exploitation, staff have regular discussions with children and help them to access accredited learning programmes. This supports children to understand how to keep themselves safer when online.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post for a significant period of time. He has good oversight of the children, the home and staff. The stability of the management arrangements in the home is reflected in the consistency of the staff team. Consequently, the children are able to build secure attachments with the adults caring for them.

Staff are supported by managers through supervision sessions and team meetings. These provide individual and group opportunities for reflection on practice and professional development. They are also a forum for the manager to share important messages, reinforce good practice and address issues or concerns. This helps to ensure that staff are kept up to date and are able to offer consistent care to children.

Leaders and managers take effective action when safeguarding concerns linked to staff arise. They make efforts to gather relevant information to assess any risk to children and put in place safeguards as appropriate. Professionals are informed, such as social workers and the local authority designated officer, and a notification is sent to Ofsted. These actions help to ensure that any possible impact on children is mitigated and that, where needed, staff can be provided with additional support to help them fulfil their role in keeping children safe.

One child's risk assessment had not been updated in their file to reflect the up-to-date strategies for staff to use. Furthermore, there are children living in the home without an up-to-date local authority care plan. One child has lived in the home for three months without the agreed care plan for staff to work to. Another child's pathway plan was not received prior to their transition out of the home. The manager and staff have challenged the children's placing authority without success. These requests have not been escalated in line with the provider's escalation procedure.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should evidence what they have done to achieve engagement from the child's local authority, including any actions taken to escalate concerns in line with their own escalation policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.3)
- The registered person should ensure that where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. This includes ensuring that risk assessments are up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: SC000820

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: Sean Cooper

Inspector

Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector

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