

SC007608

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 operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager is suitably qualified for the position held.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 October 2018

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: 9 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/01/2018	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/09/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home is warm and inviting, creating a calming and relaxing environment. At the time of the inspection, there was ongoing cleaning and decoration in all the children's and young people's bedrooms. The children and young people take pride in their home and belongings. Subsequently, damage to the home is minimal.

At the end of the school day and on return from activities, children and young people are welcomed home by a nurturing staff team. There is a real sense of family values. Together, they all congregate for their evening meals and relax while chatting. This is balanced with the children and young people spending independent time away from the home in line with their individual risk assessments. Some children and young people enjoy horse riding, while others attend their local Girl Guide group.

Children and young people receive an excellent standard of individualised care. They have all made exceptional progress from their starting points. A professional commented, 'I am just blown away by the standard of care that the children and young people receive. The staff have an amazing insight into the needs of [name of young person]. There is always continuity of care. They work fantastically with a range of agencies. They just go above and beyond, and I am amazed at [the young person's] progress in such a short period of time.'

When children and young people experience difficult episodes in their life, the registered manager and the staff team respond to incidents swiftly and in a nurturing way. There is an excellent culture in the home that applies evidence-based research in daily practice. The registered manager and the staff team are very proactive in their learning and development. Recent training events that have been attended, or that are planned, include: anxiety, worry, fears and phobias, self-harm, internet safety, digital literacy, building digital resistance, puberty and growing changes. This enhances their knowledge and skills to benefit the care that children and young people receive.

There is excellent evidence of planning and risk assessing ahead of any new admission to the home. The registered manager has an excellent pre-admission system in place to ensure that the risks to all children and young people are understood and evaluated. This has been a highly effective system, as children and young people settle and make excellent progress. When children and young people arrive, they receive a sensitive welcome to support a positive transition.

There is firm evidence that children and young people are helped to develop independence skills ready for their transition into independent or semi-independent living. When young people move on to their post-18 placements, outreach support offered enables them to benefit from the stable relationships that they have built up with the staff and other children and young people.

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

Risk assessments and the risk management processes are robust and highly effective. The staff team is small but stable. The staff team members know the children and young people extremely well. They are confident in applying knowledge from training and research into daily practice. This means they are able to plan, review and manage risks more effectively.

The registered manager promotes reflective practice to strengthen the staff team's approach to safeguarding children and young people. Additionally, safeguarding is included as a stand-alone agenda item in team meetings, group supervisions and individual supervisions. The members of the staff team are innovative and willing to try new approaches to help and protect children and young people. For example, recent learning from research around self-harm has led to a soft blanket being used to prevent further episodes of self-harm for one child. This has been highly effective, and the manager continues to monitor and review this strategy.

Children and young people build excellent relationships with the adults who care for them. Subsequently, behaviour management is excellent. Incentive charts use positive reinforcement. This has been effective at managing low-level disruptive behaviour and recognises the progress that children and young people make.

Restraints have not been required in the management of behaviour for a number of years. Bullying has not been an issue and there are appropriate staffing levels to monitor dynamics within the home. Missing from home episodes have not been an issue in this home. However, the registered manager does not become complacent and ensures that her staff team remains up to date in all mandatory training and research. She also ensures regular contact with other agencies, such as the police, to update the home's locality risk assessment as well as individual risk assessments.

The staff team members encourage children's and young people's development by balancing their interventions between keeping them safe and recognising that children and young people need to take measured risks in order to develop appropriate skills. There are clear strategies identified in risk assessments that are in line with each child's age and level of vulnerability.

Regular key-worker sessions help children and young people to learn how to keep themselves safe. One young person was confident to approach a member of staff after receiving an inappropriate message on social media. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the direct work undertaken with children and young people to keep them safe in different ways, including the digital world.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is passionate and inspirational. She and her staff team share the same values: that children and young people should receive care 'as if they are your

own'. Collectively, they have a very child-focused and nurturing approach in their responses to children and young people.

The registered manager and staff team recognise that small gestures can lift children's moods. When children and young people returned from their summer holiday, small gifts and cards were left on their beds to welcome them home and soften the 'come down effect' after the holiday.

The staff team members receive regular supervisions and appraisals. They plan effectively, while considering safeguarding concerns and the progress of children and young people. They are also effective at promoting staff development. Supervisions and team meetings create a forum to meaningfully discuss and consider children's and young people's views. For example, one child would like a pet rabbit and the staff team has discussed arrangements for this to happen.

The registered manager promotes opportunities for healthy debates and constantly looks for new ways to help develop practice and learning. Resources have included a card game and independent reading of research that the staff team members share with each other. The registered manager is respected by her staff team. The staff feel well supported and motivated as a result.

The registered manager and staff team work effectively with a number of professionals to ensure that the very best care is provided. A professional commented, 'I have been very impressed with the care that [name of young person] has received since moving to the home. The manager and her staff team have given [the young person] a feeling of being safe, wanted and understood for the first time.'

The registered manager demonstrates sound insight into the home's strengths, as well as areas that could be further improved. Her motivation and enthusiasm are highly effective at sustaining and driving improvements forward. Research that she and her staff team have reviewed has been used and disseminated across other homes in the organisation. One local authority has also used one of the home's looked after reports as a good-practice example.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC007608

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: Paula Kelly

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

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