

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	17/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC007608
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Pear Tree Projects Limited
Registered person address	Peartree House, Bolam, DARLINGTON, County Durham, DL2 2UP

Responsible individual	David Bartlett
Registered manager	Paula Kelly
Inspector	Steve Pearson

Inspection date	17/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. Young people have continued to make good progress since the previous inspection. The inspector met them again briefly at the current inspection before they went on half-term activities. All young people are happy and settled. They enjoy living at the home. All young people are maintaining 100% school attendance and since the previous inspection, some of them have gained national qualifications in mathematics and English. All young people behave well and have made good progress here since they came to live in the home. Since the previous inspection there have been no significant incidents of concern and day-to-day life in the home has been very settled. Young people are safe and the staff are effective in promoting and safeguarding their welfare. The registered manager works collaboratively with other agencies such as education, health and placing authorities to ensure young people's needs are met well. She works successfully with parents and families to promote positive relationships with the young people. This boosts children's emotional well-being. At the previous inspection Ofsted made five requirements and two recommendations. These have all been met. Consequently there is now a clear understanding in place regarding the need to communicate with Ofsted and the local authority designated officer about relevant issues; the home is now complying with the supervision procedures described in its statement of purpose; and there is clear accountability due to clear recording of information about visitors and the times of shifts worked by staff. Arrangements for ongoing improvement are better because the registered manager now writes an action plan to address shortfalls identified in their reports about care monitoring. The home's arrangements for checking the quality of care are robust. In accordance with legislation, an independent person visits the home once a month to evaluate and report on the quality of care. They make recommendations as necessary and they follow these up at the next visit. The registered manager also monitors care effectively and makes improvements where necessary.	

Since the registered manager started her position three months ago she has implemented several improvements. She was successful in her application to become registered with Ofsted. She has improved the skill base of the staff team by recruiting an extra member of staff. This person is also qualified to teach outdoor activity skills which will benefit the group of young people in their choice of leisure activities. The registered manager has also implemented a top to bottom clear-out and deep-clean of the house. Young people and staff have bought second hand storage shelves from a local charity shop. Together they have re-erected the shelf units in the house to improve storage arrangements. The home now has a new cooker and microwave and a refurbishment of the shower room has been arranged.

Care planning arrangements are now more purposeful. The registered manager has implemented clear monthly objectives for the care team to meet. These are focused on enabling young people to continue to develop positively by gaining new skills, knowledge and experiences. For example, the staff encourage young people to have at least one school day a week when they take something other than sandwiches for their packed lunch. The key workers in February have been asked to ensure all young people are aware of the work of a national charity that addresses the concerns of child trafficking. And each month the staff now help young people to learn about the food and principles of a different culture.

There were no requirements or recommendations arising from this inspection.

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private company. It is registered with Ofsted to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/11/2015	Full	Good
26/02/2015	Interim	Sustained Effectiveness
24/10/2014	Full	Good
12/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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