

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC007608
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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	Susan Atkinson-Millmoor

Inspection date	27/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC007608

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people make outstanding progress as a result of the care that they receive from a committed, professional staff team.
- The registered manager and staff consistently provide high-quality care on a day-to-day basis. Records reflect clear plans and the direction of work with young people, as well as the outcomes achieved.
- The staff team proactively encourages and enables young people to participate in activities in their local community.
- Young people benefit from clear boundaries and regular routines. The staff team are highly effective in creating a family atmosphere at the home.
- The manager provides strong, clear and passionate leadership, using recognised research to inform plans and methods of practice.
- Staff have a thorough understanding of the needs of their young people. Plans are clear and up to date.
- The manager and staff team work effectively with other professionals involved in the care of young people. All young people settle and make progress while at the home.
- The quality of relationships between the adults and young people is excellent. These are warm, evident and effective.
- The relationship between the home and the school provides a holistic approach to home and education.
- The staff team celebrates success well.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Regulation 40(4) requires the registered person to notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)–(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, when accepted. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

In particular, training should be wide ranging to enable staff to meet the statement of purpose.

Full report

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
17/02/16	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/11/15	Full	Good
26/02/15	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/10/14	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people receive high-quality, individualised care from a committed, caring and professional staff team that is led by an effective manager. The staff know the young people well and provide excellent support through the development of positive relationships. This enables young people to develop a strong sense of being valued and belonging. A social worker commented, '(name) has made massive progress because of consistent care and good relationships at the home.' The large home is well maintained and has a welcoming, calm and relaxed atmosphere from first arriving. There have been many improvements around the home in recent months, including a new kitchen and bathroom. Young people were involved in choosing the decor for communal rooms and personalising their bedrooms. This enables a sense of ownership to develop, limiting their need to damage and destroy surroundings when anxieties arise. Young people and staff chat regularly around the dining table. There are strong boundaries and routines in place that offer young people a sense of order and safety. A young person said, 'I like knowing when I need to do things like clean my bedroom.' Plans are reviewed and updated regularly. These are shared with young people and other professionals, as appropriate. This ensures that a culture of openness and transparency forms the basis for communication within the home. A reviewing officer stated, 'I get information regularly and am very impressed with the review reports.' Relationships between the registered manager, staff and young people are strong and effective. A member of staff said, 'We work well together.' Staff are aware of the plans for young people and offer consistent messages of love and support, as well as guidance. This helps young people to feel cared for and improves their emotional well-being. A young person said, 'I love everything about here.' Young people make excellent progress across a range of areas such as education, emotional and physical health, and behaviour. There have been no 'missing' episodes in a year. A young person said, 'If I didn't like it here, I wouldn't stay.' Young people achieve well at school, college or work placements. They all have a 100% level of attendance. Staff support young people in education through transport, support within the classroom and being involved in the activities, day to day. This gives staff a unique perspective on the young people's education and a	

consistent approach to dealing with issues that can arise. Staff who remain at the home daily ensure that the table is set and meals are cooked, ready for young people coming in from education or work. This reinforces that young people are cared for and that staff are interested in them.

Young people contribute well to the running of the home. This helps them to feel valued and respected. The staff hold a monthly meeting with young people at which they are able to discuss issues and make contributions. Young people were observed chatting happily about their day with each other and staff, yet also, when privacy was needed, asking to speak to staff at a later time. The impact is that a 'family' atmosphere is developed, and also that each young person develops a sense of individual belonging.

Good health is promoted within the home. When issues do arise, staff advocate well on behalf of young people to ensure that they receive services that enable them to achieve good physical and mental health.

A range of activities such as swimming, horse riding and animal care are planned with input from young people. Pets are a part of the home and young people are encouraged to take on the care of the animals, developing a sense of empathy and care for others. The ability to just relax at home is also encouraged. There is a wide range of resources available in the home for such times. This includes a wide range of books and musical instruments. The result is that talent is nurtured and supported when individuals show an interest.

The staff enable young people to consider other people in the community. Young people regularly take part in fundraising activities and are involved in volunteering work. This gives them new experiences as well as a sense of achievement. This is marked with certificates from a variety of charities, recognising their contributions. This enriches their lives while helping them to develop empathy and a social conscience.

Achievements are recognised and celebrated individually, as well as with events such as the annual ball held by the provider group that the home and school belongs to. This generates a sense of community and belonging that extends further than the home itself. This includes young people who leave the home and move on to independence. Such young people are supported by their own group that meets at specific times of the year, for instance Easter/Christmas/summer holidays. At these events, young people who have left join with those about to move on to independence, both for support and an opportunity to create supportive friendships.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people feel safe and are secure at the home. This promotes an atmosphere that enables young people to discuss issues as they arise, which limits the possible impact on their behaviour. There is a comprehensive system in place to identify risks and offer subsequent strategies to reduce or mitigate them. Risk assessment documentation is up to date. It is easy to understand, as it uses colour to identify levels of risk and has a month-by-month breakdown to assess progress made against strategies outlined. Review reports that detail activities and incidents, along with an evaluation by young people, ensure that they and those professionals involved in their care are consistently clear about the progress that they make. The impact is that young people understand how each aspect of their lives interplays and has both a cause and an effect. This enables young people to take control of the progress that they make. The manager and staff consistently promote and role model effective positive behaviour, using research-based methods of communication such as coaching to influence and change behaviour. All young people have made significant progress from their starting points upon being admitted to the home. The use of sanctions for unacceptable behaviour is minimal. A system of rewards is preferred by the manager and staff, and this is effective in promoting good behaviour. In addition, an incentive scheme that young people respond to well is in place for daily tasks. There have been no incidents of exploitation at the home. Staff are aware of the risks to young people and discuss those risks with them in an age-appropriate manner on a regular basis. Independent information is available to young people to enable them to keep safe and seek help, if needed. Such information includes keeping safe when online. Staff use knowledge of internet games/websites to ensure that young people learn to use technology safely. This ensures a consistency of messages of safety to young people. Health and safety are taken seriously at the home. Risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly. Fire drills are carried out as required, and all equipment in the home is well maintained and tested within timescales. This demonstrates that all aspects of the overall quality of care are given equal consideration. This ensures the safety of young people.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has only been in the position since January of this year, and holds a level 5 qualification relevant to the role. She is a highly effective and motivational manager who leads a very knowledgeable, committed staff team. She has the drive and determination to ensure that young people's needs are met and exceeded. This, combined with the expectation that all staff deliver care in this way, ensures that young people will thrive and achieve during their time at the home. A member of staff said, '(the manager) is very transparent and supportive.' The manager leads by example, working with the young people directly as part of the team as much as possible. This enables her to observe at first hand staff's practice and how they interact with the young people in their care. This means that she can identify any shortfalls in their practice and offer support to develop their skills further. A member of staff said, '(the manager) boosts your confidence.' This is underpinned by her regularly identifying research and examples of good practice that she expects staff to read and digest. This helps to ensure that practice is always developing. Records and care plans are comprehensive and up to date. Records detail positive actions and activities, as well as those that cause concern. However, one record identified an issue that should have been notified to the regulator. Although this incident took place at the school, it involved two young people from the home. All the required actions were carried out and recorded, but a notification would have enabled the regulator to ensure that all actions were completed at an earlier stage. The manager ensures that the staff are well supported to undertake their roles effectively. Supervision is regular and evaluative. Records show in-depth discussions with staff in relation to young people and their own practice. The impact is that staff have the right support to undertake their roles effectively, ensuring that they meet the needs of young people and address the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose. Team meetings take place monthly and are well attended. The minutes show that the care and progress of the young people are always central to practice, planning and development. All decisions made focus on their best interests, promoting progress and good outcomes. Training for mandatory courses is up to date, but the team would benefit from wider training to enhance their practice with current and future young people. A comprehensive locality risk assessment is kept under regular review. It demonstrates that the manager has consulted with relevant professionals such as the police, local authority safeguarding officers and fire services to determine the	

continued suitability of the home's location. This helps to identify any emerging issues in the community and ensures that young people are effectively safeguarded.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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