

SC035220

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning difficulties.

The registered manager has been registered since 2013.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 November 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

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

Date of last inspection: 16 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/10/2018	Full	Good
24/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/12/2016	Full	Outstanding

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on– mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure– that staff– understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(ix))	07/12/2019
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure– that staff– assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12(1), (2)(a)(i)(v))	07/12/2019
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if– the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24(1)(b))	07/12/2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a cosy and nicely decorated home that is well stocked with toys, books and games. The enclosed garden is a thoughtfully designed space with equipment for various forms of play. Photographs displayed around the home show the children taking part in fun and exciting activities. The children are benefiting from a wide range of experiences and are making memories of positive times with the caring adults who support them.

The children have good attendance at school and are all making progress from their starting points. Children are encouraged to take part in activities to further develop their learning at home. In one of the communal areas, there is a large wall that is decorated with children's certificates for various achievements, including a first-place 'Celebrate me' award. This visual reminder of success demonstrates that achievements are celebrated, and this helps to improve children's confidence and develop self-pride.

Children move in and out of the home following careful planning. The manager considers the impact on each child and put measures in place to ensure that transitions are sensitively supported. The children are consulted so that their bedrooms can be personalised to their taste. Children's individual tastes and preferences are respected, and this helps them to feel valued.

There is strong evidence that values such as respect and kindness are promoted to the children in their day-to-day lives. The children take part in activities that enable them to contribute to the wider community, and this helps them to learn about the world around them and to develop a sense of belonging.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Key-work sessions are used to help the children to increase their knowledge and ability to keep themselves safe. Topics such as online safety and bullying are covered, and this helps children to share and explore their feelings while learning the skills required to recognise risk.

When there have been safeguarding concerns, the manager and her team have acted quickly to ensure the immediate safety of the children. On one occasion, the manager did not involve all the required parties in the safeguarding procedures. This means that, while it did not result in any harm to children, the oversight of this incident was not enough to ensure that all safeguarding procedures were followed. The manager did identify this shortfall and demonstrated that she understands the process to follow in future.

The links between behaviour are not always considered or recorded in such a way as to provide an opportunity to learn whether there are any patterns or triggers for

behaviours. Risk assessments do not always contain information that may be significant to understanding and reducing risk. While this has not negatively impacted on children, risk assessment processes require improvement to ensure that children continue to be safe.

Supervision levels are high to ensure the safety of children. The home is fitted with devices for monitoring to keep children safe, and this is explained to children during their induction to the home. There are not always consents in place as required to ensure that the placing authority agrees with the use of such a device.

Children are helped to develop positive relationships in the home. For some children, this is significant progress and demonstrates that they are becoming increasingly safe. The manager has worked closely with police to arrange visits to the home so that children benefit from developing positive relationships with others who can help and protect them. The combination of these relationships is helping to ensure that children are safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager, who is a highly experienced and suitably qualified practitioner, continually seeks out learning opportunities for her team to further enhance their skill level. Supervisions take place with regularity and are used to drive improvement forward. The feedback from staff demonstrates that they share the passion and vision of their manager and, through the developments that they are offered, they feel valued.

The manager has implemented auditing processes for records and documents that enable effective management oversight. There is clear evidence that she uses these processes to continually reinforce her high expectations for children in her care.

The manager demonstrates that she challenges other agencies when she feels that this is necessary to enable the best outcomes for children. The manager works collaboratively, forming positive relationships with other professionals, who feedback that she is an 'excellent communicator' and 'always does her utmost for children'.

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 difference 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: SC035220

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

Responsible individual: Karen Robb

Registered manager: Joan Inns

Inspector

Paula Kelly, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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