

SC035235

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to 3 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2025.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 June 2026

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: 18 June 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/06/2025	Full	Good
27/11/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/05/2024	Full	Inadequate
06/02/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

Children have open, positive relationships with the people who care for them and are confident in expressing their wishes and feelings. Leaders and managers listen to children and use their feedback to inform plans for the home.

Staff help children learn how to get along with others, acting as positive role models and appropriately challenging unkind language and behaviour. Children learn the importance of positive behaviour, when to apologise, and how to make amends.

Children are encouraged to try new activities and take appropriate risks. This broadens their experiences and helps to develop their confidence.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff work effectively to build strong relationships with children, which is the cornerstone of the progress they make. Most children have a trusted adult in the home whom they can approach if they have any concerns or worries. Staff advocate well on behalf of the children to ensure that their needs are met.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of the importance of education. Staff encourage children to attend school and participate in any additional after-school tutoring. All the children make good progress at school, meeting their academic targets and displaying positive behaviour in class. Children are engaged in their learning and have aspirations for their futures.

The manager ensures that children's needs are thoroughly assessed before they move into the home. Children benefit from therapeutic oversight provided by an in-house expert. They can meet with the therapist to discuss any issues or worries they may need to work through. This provides an opportunity for children to reflect in an open and safe forum, in addition to the conversations they have with staff. Introductions to the home and transitions take place at a pace that suits all children, while also supporting new children to build relationships with staff and their peers.

Staff encourage children to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Children are offered a range of activities, which staff support them to enjoy. Trips to the coast, trampolining, dance classes, and bike rides are regular occurrences. Healthy eating and personal hygiene are actively promoted. Staff support children in spending time with their friends in the community.

Staff have positive relationships with other professionals outside the home who work with the children. Appropriate professionals are involved as and when required. Feedback from professionals is overwhelmingly positive. One professional said, 'I cannot

believe how well [name of child] is doing and expressing themselves appropriately. The progress [name of child] has made is excellent.'

Children benefit from living in a spacious environment with access to an outdoor area for play. They are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their interests and hobbies. The staff ensure that any damage in the home is reported promptly and repaired in a timely manner, so that the environment remains pleasant for children to live in.

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

Staff follow detailed protocols for children who go missing from home, although such incidents are rare. Guidance for staff is clear. Staff know the children well and build positive relationships with their families. As a result, staff are able to search the local area effectively and have a good understanding of where children are likely to go.

Staff rarely need to physically hold children to keep everyone safe, as they are skilled in using de-escalation strategies. When physical intervention is necessary, the manager maintains effective oversight. Following any incidents, staff and children engage in meaningful discussions to reflect on what happened. Children and staff are encouraged to learn from incidents and consider what can be done in the future to prevent recurrence.

The manager ensures that all staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to provide effective care. Children benefit from a well-trained and supportive staff team that understands their needs and is equipped to support them.

Staff are provided with detailed and regularly reviewed risk assessments. These guide staff in supporting children to take age-appropriate risks, both in the community and online. When risks escalate, the manager takes prompt action to address them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager understands the home's current developmental stage and has a clear vision for its future. Areas for development have been identified, and an action plan is in place.

Supervision sessions are reflective and supportive, and new staff receive appropriate support and encouragement. Senior leaders demonstrate genuine care and compassion when managers and staff experience issues outside of work. Equally, when shortfalls are identified, these are addressed directly with the relevant member of staff.

The manager's systems for monitoring and oversight enable her to identify learning needs for both the team and individual staff members. Staff development is a priority; leaders and managers use creative approaches to communicate complex concepts in a way that staff understand. New staff report a positive and supportive induction

experience when joining the team. Existing staff benefit from structured workbooks that help them progress in their role.

The manager has built a strong team, ensuring that vacancies are filled promptly and safely. Any gaps in rotas are covered by familiar, experienced casual staff when required. Staff speak positively about the working environment and the support they receive from leaders and managers. They feel invested in the home and in achieving positive outcomes for the children.

No requirements or recommendations were raised following this inspection.

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: SC035235

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Registered provider address: Fostering and Adoption Team, Spectrum 8, Spectrum Business Park, Seaham SR7 7TT

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Kimberley Ternent

Inspector

Kirstie Sutherland, Social Care Inspector

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