

SC035235

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 for the care and accommodation of up to three children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager has been registered since 2007.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 July 2018

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: 6 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/06/2017	Full	Good
14/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/10/2016	Full	Good
11/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)

In particular, when the home can no longer meet the needs of a child, ensure that the transition is completed in a timely manner.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has been very settled over the inspection period with no children or young people leaving or being admitted. Also, there have been no changes in the staff team at all. The home is cosy and homely. The staff have positive relationships with all of the young people and offer nurturing care to them.

The inspector observed the young people interacting well with the staff, arranging activities, negotiating what they could and couldn't do, discussing issues that were important to them and making decisions about day-to-day life in the home. The home is child centred, and the young people are fully involved in all aspects of the home.

All the young people have made good or better progress. The staff have been more focused in their work with the young people and have been able to offer more in-depth support. This individualised work has been well planned, and young people's progress is recorded accurately. The staff engage outside specialist workers when necessary, and this adds to the support that the young people receive.

It was clear to the inspector that the young people make good progress in dealing with their emotional and well-being needs. One young person has gained in confidence and has built resilience, and as a result is flourishing.

All the young people have good attendance at school and all are achieving at their expected levels. One young person has been able to make significant positive changes to their behaviour at school which has enabled them to achieve better results.

There is an emphasis on developing life skills and experiences. The staff support the young people to have outside interests and to try new experiences. Two of the young people were planning a trip to London, and one young person had requested to go camping with staff.

The young people have also been supported by staff to improve relationships with their

families, and to understand some of the difficulties in their family relationships. This is a positive development.

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

The young people in the home are kept safe. The staff understand risks and assess them well, and also know to put appropriate controls into place. They put appropriate boundaries and expectations in place and the young people understand these.

One young person, who has additional needs, now requires greater supervision, and staff are making appropriate plans for this to happen. This young person's needs have changed as they have grown up, and staff have recognised this. The inspector has made a recommendation that these plans are completed in a timely manner.

One young person has gone missing on several occasions for short periods of time after they have become frustrated and angry. Staff have reacted quickly and appropriately on each occasion and have kept them safe.

Another young person has been attempting to bully the other young people. Again, staff have reacted well and carried out appropriate support work with all the young people to limit this behaviour. While this has mostly been bickering and squabbling, some of the incidents have involved verbal abuse and staff are continuing to work hard to prevent this happening more frequently.

The staff have worked hard with all the young people around relationships and keeping themselves safe, and this has been effective.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been in post for some considerable time and is appropriately qualified. She is very experienced, skilled and confident. She gives the needs of the young people the highest priority and is ambitious for them all. She has built a strong, competent team of workers and is ably supported by some very committed and skilled senior workers.

Over the period since the last inspection she has, with her staff, introduced a number of new ways of working which have meant that the work is now more individualised and of a greater depth. Alongside this, she has introduced new recording systems which allow staff to be more focused on relevant areas, goals and targets. The evidence shows that the work has improved, and it is clear to the inspector that various ideas from research have been used. This is a clear improvement and development for the service, and it is ongoing. The staff team has taken these ideas on board and has started putting them into practice so that the new processes are having a positive effect on the progress of the young people.

The staff confirm that the registered manager is supportive of them with supervision and training, and that the training programme at the home is wide ranging and in-depth.

The registered manager is able to find and use outside resources and expertise when required, and she works well in partnership with them. She has engaged in working with some external colleagues on a research project to look at the 'staying put' agenda and service. This has involved some of the young people living at the home, and some past residents.

At the previous inspection, a requirement had been made to improve the record-keeping in the home, and this has been done thoroughly. Recording in all areas is now good.

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: SC035235

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: Bernadette Olney

Inspector

Colin Imrie, social care inspector

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