

SC035648

Registered provider: Durham County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children and young people's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 38 children and young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides for up to eight children and young people placed by the Youth Custody Service and for 30 children and young people accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities.

Admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The registered manager is registered with Ofsted and has managed the home since October 2015. He holds suitable higher-level qualifications for this role.

Inspection date: 4 February 2020

Date of last inspection: 10 September 2019

Judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

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 outstanding at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

At the last inspection in September 2019, Ofsted made three recommendations. One recommendation relates to a shortfall in education. Ofsted will consider progress to address this recommendation at the next inspection. The registered manager has taken appropriate action to address the remaining two shortfalls. However, Ofsted has made a further recommendation following this inspection.

The child-focused multi-agency meetings that form the basis of the internal care planning process are a considerable strength of this service. Case managers now ensure that records of these meetings also include the rationale for any decisions made. This enables senior managers to review these records to establish that the decisions made are in children's best interests and promote their safety.

Staff quickly challenge all incidents of bullying and discrimination. They complete follow-up work with the children to help them to understand how harmful these behaviours are and the negative impact bullying has on the welfare and well-being of others. However, staff do not always ensure that they cross-reference this follow-up work in initial incident records to demonstrate that children have completed this work in a timely manner.

Children continue to make excellent progress in all areas of their development. The integrated care model of 'secure stairs' means that all staff, regardless of role, deliver care and support in relation to the ethos of 'every intervention matters'. Clinical support for staff helps them to gain a better understanding of the children's needs and equips them with the skills to meet these needs. Consequently, children's day-to-day experiences are exceptionally positive, and they thrive in this setting.

Staff benefit from regular and reflective formal supervision. These sessions encourage staff to identify their own learning needs and consider how their skills and knowledge support children's progress. Senior managers continually review internal training plans. This means that staff are supported in their role and have the skills they need to deliver good-quality care for the children.

Behaviour management focuses on praising and rewarding children's positive actions. Staff continue to use distraction and verbal de-escalation techniques to encourage children to increasingly gain control over their emotions. When physical restraint is necessary, staff ensure that they complete records of these incidents to a high standard. These records include feedback and comments from the children involved. Senior managers are tenacious in their review of the use of physical restraint. They use closed-circuit television to review all incidents to confirm that the use of this measure of control was necessary, proportionate and lawful. This allows

managers to effectively scrutinise these incidents and identify any areas for staff development. Consequently, this promotes the children's safety and creates a continual learning culture for staff.

The senior leadership team uses a range of monitoring data and qualitative information to identify patterns and trends. Through this process, the registered manager produces action plans to address any practice shortfalls and consider areas for further development. As a result, the service continually evolves to meet the children's changing needs.

The managers have addressed catering shortfalls. Food quality has improved, and food presentation is now more appealing. This encourages the children to try new foods.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2019	Full	Outstanding
19/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/09/2018	Full	Good
16/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Ensure staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Specifically, ensure that the details of follow-up intervention work relating to bullying and racial incidents are cross referenced in the records of these incidents.

Information about this inspection

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.

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: SC035648

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

Registered provider address: County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

Responsible individual: Martyn Stenton

Registered manager: Selwyn Morgans

Inspectors

Jo Stephenson, Social Care Inspector
Shaun Common, Senior Officer, Secure Estate

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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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