

SC037984

Registered provider: Darlington Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and accommodation for three children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 May 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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 5 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2017	Full	Good
18/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/04/2016	Full	Good
17/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, 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
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) and (2))	13/06/2018

Recommendations

- Children should be supported to understand how to build friendships with other children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.7)
In particular, this refers to positive relationships with peers in the wider community

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children benefit from a stable and competent staff team. Well written residential placement plans are reviewed consistently in line with changes which are intrinsically linked to behaviour support plans and risk assessments. The high level of recording supports the evaluation of progress made by children.

The quality of care provided by staff is very nurturing, responsive and focused on helping children to achieve stability in their lives. Change is supported step by step and at the children's pace and ability. Children develop in confidence, building self-esteem and trust in appropriate adults. However, progress in children being able to develop age-appropriate relationships with peers is not apparent in individual cases. This limits their ability to form and sustain attachments.

The children develop a sense of belonging and self-worth. Progress is measurable in their growing ability to regulate their emotional responses through improvements in behaviour and communication with staff and other professionals.

The children develop independence skills appropriate to their age and abilities. The staff team ensures that praise and reward are consistent and achievements are enthusiastically celebrated. The staff team provides children with good quality 'memory books' that capture their life story while at the home. Children benefit from a wealth of positive experiences that help them to develop resilience and self-esteem.

The staff team maintains good relationships with parents and families. The staff support and supervise contact when required, ensuring that children are safe at all times. Positive collaboration with families helps to promote good outcomes for children.

Staff support children transitioning from the home, by ensuring that collaboration with professionals and new placements are at the centre of practice.

The staff team works closely with educational providers. This ensures that they can offer all children, including those not in mainstream schools, suitable alternative provisions. Staff source additional support with private tutors.

The children attend health appointments and maintain healthy lifestyles.

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

Staff support the children to understand risk and to stay safe. Effective and detailed risk assessments enable the staff team to follow agreed multi-agency strategies, which reduce the potential for harm.

The members of the staff team are knowledgeable about children's harmful experiences and associated behaviours that are as a direct result. They use their training and experience to build trusted relationships with children. With dedication and resilience, the staff are able to create a positive, nurturing environment that enables children to feel safe. The children develop a positive sense of well-being among a highly supportive staff team.

The staff team provides consistent messages and ensures that boundaries are reinforced, which helps children to develop socially acceptable behaviours. The staff team is trained in behaviour management, and physical intervention is rarely required. However, isolated incidents are not always responded to proportionately. Thus, such incidents could result in avoidable and unintentional harm to children and staff.

The staff team works collaboratively with other agencies and professionals to proactively manage children's emotional vulnerability. Specialist intervention and good communication assist the staff team's understanding of the therapeutic support provided to children, thus enabling step-by-step progress to take place. Reading materials promoted and made available by the registered manager support staff's awareness of

child sexual exploitation and other forms of harmful manipulation. This educative process assists staff to be alert to triggers and changes in behaviours that may be demonstrated by children.

The staff team responds quickly and proactively in safeguarding children in times of crisis. The direct work with the police in gathering intelligence supports safe care in the community and in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The leadership and management team is appropriately qualified and experienced. The registered manager is very nurturing and responsive to individual children's needs. She leads a team that has high aspirations for children, a good understanding of needs and that is motivated to improve outcomes for them.

Admission processes are well organised and thorough in ensuring that children are supported to understand expectations and boundaries. Additionally, children are provided with a child-friendly information booklet with introductory profiles of staff. This helps children to settle and become aware of their living environment.

Morale in the staff team is strong. Its members are a stable workforce who are supported through regular formal supervision. The registered manager and senior members of the team provide support at all times and are very relaxed and approachable.

The manager uses internal and external monitoring processes to good effect and takes action to address shortfalls quickly and efficiently. The home and its recording mechanisms are maintained to a good standard. The children receive consistent messages as a result of excellent communication with partner agencies.

The registered manager ensures that notifications of significant events are made available to the appropriate agencies. Any complaints follow the procedures as identified in the home's statement of purpose. The children contribute to their records, which reflect their views. Outcomes and changes to care and practice are shared with children, and explanations are provided. As a result, children feel valued and part of decision-making processes that influence their overall care.

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: SC037984

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, County Durham DL1 5QT

Responsible individual: Jane Kochanowski

Registered manager: Toni Mace

Inspector

Michael Dack, social care inspector

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