

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	17/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC037984
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Darlington Borough Council
Registered person address	Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, County Durham, DL1 5QT

Responsible individual	David Mason
Registered manager	Toni Mace
Inspector	Michele Hargan

Inspection date	17/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Sustained Effectiveness. All young people enjoy routine stays with their family at weekends for an extended period of time and until very recently, the home has therefore not been staffed when young people are on overnight visits with their families. As a result, staff have worked flexibly to support colleagues within other children's homes. They have also used this opportunity to undertake additional training, improving their understanding and skills in a range of areas. For example, radicalisation, forced marriage and health and safety. Ensuring staff's continuing professional development increases their effectiveness and helps them feel valued, sustaining their motivation to ensure good outcomes for young people. A senior member of staff said, 'I now have a health and safety qualification. I am clearer about my responsibilities, it really made me think about what else I needed to do.' A senior leader said, 'The staff have pulled together and done well during a difficult period.' Staff are effective at working with other professionals, parents and carers, sending a clear message to young people that their needs are staff's highest priority. This helps establish trust and promotes feelings of safety and security. Staff continue to provide help and support when young people are in the care of their families. A member of staff said, 'We made sure young people and their families knew how to contact us if they needed to at weekends. At first we did welfare checks, we'd phone them just to make sure they were okay.' Young people are safe and staff know what to do to ensure their ongoing safety and welfare. Young people learn to take better care of themselves, because they see staff take appropriate action to assure their wellbeing. Young people no longer have to sign various documents to indicate their taking part in activities of daily living; such as receiving their pocket money or taking part in key worker sessions. This means young people enjoy similar rights and freedoms as their peers. Reports compiled by staff for young people's reviews are now presented with an improved, more accessible format. This helps young people gain increased understanding about their progress and experiences within the home. These reports now also serve as a chronology, should young people choose to access	

their case records at a future time.

Young people's right to confidentiality is further protected. Staff now ensure that all information recorded about young people's daily activities are retained within individualised records that are in effect, a daily diary that young people can see if they wish. This enables young people ease of access to information that the home retains about them. These developments meet the three recommendations raised at the previous inspection.

Young people are only admitted to the home following careful planning to ensure that their needs can be well met. Staff involve young people in their admission process helping them invest in their new home so they settle in from the beginning of their placement. A social worker said, '(Name) went shopping with staff and chose everything for her room. The staff gave her the welcome pack. I think the admission has been well planned.' Staff said, '(Name) said it was the first time she had chosen her own bedding and things for her room. She has chosen a lovely mirror.'

Young people make good progress taking into account their starting points. As a result, they learn to work in partnership. For example, by voluntarily attending revision classes leading to increased academic success. Good co-ordinated planning assures young people have a smooth transition to other placements. This means they have the best possible start, helping them maximise the opportunity that the move brings. A member of staff said, 'It went really well. We took (name) to the school, he got changed into his uniform and then he said you can go now. He phoned us up and then couldn't wait to get off the phone because he said he loads to do.'

Young people's behaviour is managed well. It is not necessary to use any physical intervention to keep young people safe. Sanctions given to young people are low level and very few. Young people's positive behaviour and achievements are recognised and rewarded by staff. This helps young people own their achievements and spurs them on to achieve further.

The registered manager is a suitably qualified and experienced individual. This person's post has now been made permanent, removing any uncertainty about the future leadership and management of the home. Young people live in a home that undergoes careful scrutiny from independent visitors. The resulting reports clearly demonstrate the home is very well managed and that staff safeguard and ensure the wellbeing of young people.

Information about this children's home

The home may provide care and accommodation for three young people with emotional and or behavioural difficulties (EBD). The home is owned and operated by local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/08/2015	Full	Good
24/03/2015	Interim	Declined in Effectiveness
10/12/2014	Full	Good
20/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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