

SC444289

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties and/or mental disorders. The manager was registered in 2012.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 February 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 30 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2018	Full	Outstanding
08/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
07/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home is based on a working farm. The children and young people enjoy looking after the animals and playing in the grounds. Fresh produce is available and used daily. This helps children and young people to understand where their food has come from. There is excellent promotion of healthy living for the children and young people. They are offered healthy food options and encouraged to be active. This enables them to develop self-care skills and prepare them for adulthood.

Children and young people living in this home receive an exceptional standard of care. Subsequently, they are each making excellent progress in all areas of their lives. Children and young people who have complex health needs are very well supported and have made significant progress. The staff team works well with a range of health and social care professionals to ensure that children's and young people's holistic care needs are met. Some services have withdrawn their input because of the progress children have made and the fact that they no longer need the additional support initially provided. In other instances, medications have been reduced or withdrawn, or medical conditions may have cleared up or improved because staff have sought appropriately focused medical support that has improved children's and young people's well-being.

Low level challenging behaviours are managed well. Sanctions are restorative in nature and effective. Additionally, proactive key-worker sessions help children and young people understand the impact and consequences of negative behaviours. There is work completed around values, equality and anti-bullying. This helps children and young people develop pro-social behaviours both in and outside the home.

Children experience smooth transitions into the home because of the high priority that staff give to careful planning and to understanding children's needs through the completion of well-informed assessments. A professional commented, 'This is a fantastic home, it knows the children very well and this helps settle them. The staff team is very skilled. It's the consistent clear boundaries that make this home work as well as it does.'

Each child and young person has an individual and comprehensive care plan and risk

assessment. Children and young people are encouraged to contribute to their records. Child-friendly care plans help children and young people to see how they will be helped and supported by the adults that care for them. Additionally, 'things I should be proud of' included in child-friendly care plans help children and young people recognise their own progress. This helps build their confidence and self-esteem.

Children and young people are regularly consulted via house meetings and key-worker sessions. Planned events have taken place following requests such as celebrating the Chinese New Year and Burns Night. There is good evidence that the views of children and young people are acted on, but outcomes of the process are not routinely recorded to help children and young people understand any response to their requests.

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

There is an excellent safeguarding culture in the home. Additional training includes child sexual exploitation, self-harm, and the Philomena project, which is a joint protocol with police in the area. This helps the staff team know how to respond to specific risks and concerns.

Where there have been safeguarding incidents, decisive action has been taken to safeguard children and young people. The staff team follows individual risk assessments and the appropriate protocols to manage risks effectively.

Despite there being no missing from home episodes since 2017, the manager maintains positive relationships with a range of professionals including the police. The manager ensures that monthly Vulnerable Exploited Missing Trafficked meetings are attended by himself or a staff member. Preventative measures are taken to safeguard each child and young person.

Children and young people spoken to say that they feel safe and know the adults are there to help protect them. One young person commented, 'I love my home. It is really safe here, and I like the other young people. We are a family.'

The use of social media and the internet is carefully managed to enable children and young people to enjoy using it safely. The staff team has taken a rigorous approach to educate the young people around cyber risks, including cyber bullying. This means that children and young people develop skills that are likely to help keep them safe as they grow.

Effective behaviour management has significantly reduced the number of physical interventions used. There is no damage to the property and children and young people take pride in their home and surroundings. They contribute and help keep the home clean and tidy with the support of staff. This helps develop independent skills as well as teaching young people the value of belongings.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has an excellent inspection history. He is supported in his role by a dedicated staff team. The manager leads by example. Together with his staff team, they have a shared goal to be aspirational for the young people. This supports excellent

progress and good outcomes.

The manager is confident in challenging other professionals where there are shortfalls in the quality of care provided to children and young people. His assertiveness has led to much needed specialist services becoming involved, such as children and adolescent mental health services. He maintains positive working relationships with other agencies. Feedback from a range of professionals was impressive, with comments such as 'strong leader' and 'passionate' being phrases commonly used.

The registered manager recognises the importance of developing a skilled staff team. He has sourced training that is relevant to the needs of the children and young people. Training includes foetal alcohol, post-traumatic stress, epilepsy and child adolescent development and attachment. The staff team feels confident and valued as a result.

The manager has a strong presence in the home. He monitors practice and ensures that the home is maintained to a high standard. The children and young people have an excellent relationship with him and the staff team and they enjoy spending time with them.

The manager has excellent monitoring systems in place. This means that he is quickly able to respond to shortfalls and track trends and themes to improve practice. He has developed an audit tool for new staff to help them learn about the children and young people, policies and procedures. This has strengthened the induction process for new staff. He plans to develop this across the other homes.

The manager knows the home's strengths as well as areas for development. He accepts constructive feedback from the independent visitor as well as the inspector to help improve and raise standards in the home.

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: SC444289

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Registered provider address: Peartree House, Bolam, Darlington, County Durham
DL2 2UP

Responsible individual: David Bartlett

Registered manager: Gary Ramsbottom

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

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