

SC444289

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a private provider. It offers care for up to four children requiring support with their social, emotional and mental health well-being or with a learning disability. Four children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager registered in July 2012.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2023	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Full	Good
21/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
05/02/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live just outside of a main town. The home is set on its own land with animals. The children participate in the animals' day-to-day care. The animals are clearly important to them. Children have personalised their rooms with bedding, soft furnishings and favourite photos and prints. The home is spacious and warm, and there are no restrictions in place. There are photos throughout the home of the children having fun and being celebrated.

Children have warm, trusting relationships with staff, and they can all identify someone they can talk to if they have a concern. These relationships continue after they leave the home, and ongoing support is offered to them. This supports children dealing with big changes in their lives and promotes emotional well-being.

Children are achieving well in all areas of their lives. They engage in education and aspire for their future. Two children spoke about the positive values that they are learning, such as being courageous and respectful. Children are active, eat healthily and are motivated to get up in the morning. Families and professionals recognise the changes in the children's lives.

Children have lots of activities to do on the farmland and in the community, including going on holiday and attending cultural events. Children are supported to follow their interests and grow in confidence through the activities they do. They ride horses, gaining increasing confidence and learning how to care for the animals. Some children play sports in local teams.

Children are encouraged to share their views about day-to-day living. Professionals report that the manager advocates strongly for children. Some children have an advocate, and they can access a variety of support agencies via a sheet with QR codes in their bedroom. Children are encouraged to influence their care package and to speak up. This gives them the confidence to express their views and wishes and prepares them for independent living.

Children are supported to see their families. Staff help children to visit family who live further away at important times, and they welcome families to visit the farm and spend time with the children there. Family relationships have improved for some children through a creative approach to support.

When one child left the home, the team extended support until the right placement locally could be found. This allowed the child to continue their education and stay connected with important relationships in their life.

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

Children living in the home do not often go missing, but staff are clear about their responsibilities if this happens. Children say they feel safe at the home. Staff are nurturing and responsive, and they understand the impact of previous trauma on children. Routines and structure are clear throughout the home, and children respond positively to them.

Children's health needs are identified, and they attend appointments. Work is done with children to improve their health. One child has stopped using sleep medication since arriving at the home. Another child has a sleep meditation CD to listen to, which encourages sleep. Children are tired at the end of the day after being at school and active. Children's health has improved partly because of their active outdoor lifestyle.

Staff's monitoring of the internet and children's phones is well managed. The children also have assessments related to their understanding of safety on the farm. The staff support children to complete accredited exam units and work together to help children understand the risks and learn to keep themselves safe.

Staff understand most of the children's risks and work together to reduce them. However, instructions regarding a physical intervention in one child's plan indicated an intervention for which staff were not trained. This was not used but posed a risk to a child whilst it was an instruction in a careplan if staff tried to use it without having the necessary training. This was rectified during the inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has a strong vision for the service, which is focused on children recovering from trauma, feeling safe and living in a nurturing home where they can make progress. Managers oversee and review incidents thoroughly, and lessons are learned and shared with the staff team. They also reflect when children leave and gather feedback so that they can improve their practice.

The registered manager knows the children well. The manager has a system to monitor the progress of children, which identifies where they are achieving and where they need extra support. This also links to education goals, and it is easy to see the progress being made and adapted for each child. This supports a child-centred approach to development.

The registered manager knows the strengths of the home and acts on feedback to improve the home. The requirement made on the last inspection has been met. This offers children greater freedom in the home. The manager has also reviewed other restrictions and reduced them accordingly following the departure of a child. Most recommendations have also been met. The registered manager and team seek to improve the quality of care in the home for children.

There is an open culture in the home, and professionals and families say they are welcomed onto the site and speak highly of the manager and staff team. They also say that managers challenge them when they do not fulfil their roles in a timely manner, and this affects the children. This is done in a positive manner, reflecting the child's views, wishes and feelings while ensuring that actions are completed. The team also reflects on their practice regularly and adapts it to meet the needs of the children.

The staff in the home are established and suitably trained and qualified. They receive regular supervision and work together as a team to provide a good quality of care. They also remain up to date with their training. Discussions recorded in team meetings are thorough and capture key areas for children and the running of the home. Professionals described the team as resilient and spoke highly of the care provided.

There were no new staff in the home in this period, so recruitment records were not checked on this occasion.

The manager has notified Ofsted of some events during this period. However, there have been incidents that were not notified, and this prevents the regulator from having oversight when there is an increased risk to a child.

The recommendation regarding the manager's supervision being recorded has been restated. A brief summary was captured, but this was infrequent and does not reflect the support, guidance, training and advice given to the registered manager.

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, The 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
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	29 December 2023

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that a written record of supervision is kept for the manager. It is also good practice for the record to include the content of the discussion and/or outcomes. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that all their staff have been adequately trained in the principles of restraint and any restraint techniques appropriate to the needs of the children the home is set up to care for, as defined in the home's statement of purpose. Those commissioning training in restraint for children's homes' staff should be satisfied that the training fits with their approach to restraint or existing restraint system and is appropriate to the needs of the children the home is set up to care for. They should see evidence that any

restraint techniques the training advocates for have been medically assessed to demonstrate their safety for use in the context of caring for children who are still developing, physically and emotionally. The registered person should routinely review the effectiveness of any restraint system commissioned. In particular, they should check that the medical assessment of the system remains up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraphs 57 and 58)

Information about this 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: 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

Carol Jagger, Social Care Inspector

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