

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	29/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC444289
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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	Colin Imrie

Inspection date	29/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC444289

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The leadership and management of this home is very strong. The responsible individual provides excellent leadership, a clear model for working and a wide range of very impressive resources. The registered manager has a great deal of experience and is confident and very able. He is an excellent role model and has very strong relationships with all the children and young people. He has high aspirations for all the children and young people. He also has high expectations of all his staff. The deputy manager and senior workers are also experienced and dedicated to the home.
- The home is one of a group run by the organisation. The organisation has a clear model of working which involves close supervision of the children and young people and the provision of a full programme of education and activities for them. The children and young people admitted are all dealing with past traumas and the structured approach allows them to start and maintain their recovery. This approach is highly effective and not only keeps the children and young people safe but also allows them to build confidence, self-esteem and resilience.
- The children and young people are kept very safe. Staff make very good assessments of risk and put appropriate measures in place to minimise any identified risks. The children and young people are highly supervised until such time as they are able to cope with free time safely. The staff make good plans for the children and young people to become increasing independent but this is done in small steps over a period of time.
- The home is part of a working farm and the children and young people all take an active part in looking after the animals and are able to ride horses. There is also a variety of workshops and vocational activities where the children and young people are able to learn new skills and gain new qualifications. The organisation also operates a small school which offers a limited range of academic lessons and a range of vocational and outdoor activities. These resources contribute significantly to the overall programme of work.
- As well as keeping the children and young people busy, the staff team also create a nurturing and homely environment where the children and young people are relaxed and comfortable. The pressure of the outside world is taken away and they can feel safe and secure. This environment allows time for recovery, time for them to form an identity and time to rebuild themselves ready for independence into adulthood.

Full report

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 who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties or mental disorders.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/12/2015	Full	Good
09/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/10/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The home has been particularly settled over the past year since the previous full inspection. There have been no changes of staff, one young person has left in a positive way and two children and young people have been admitted after careful planning and detailed pre-admission assessments. The home offers longer term placements for children and young people who have previously experienced trauma and abuse and has a clear model of intervention and recovery. The home is set on a working farm in a rural setting and allows children and young people to be able to live away from many of the pressures of life. The organisation that runs the home operates a small school nearby where many of the children and young people can receive an education in a setting that is sheltered and nurturing. The staff and the organisation place a high emphasis on close supervision of the children and young people and on keeping them very busy with a wide variety of educational, vocational and leisure activities. This, together with a very nurturing approach, creates an environment where the children and young people are able to grow in confidence and self-esteem and are able develop some resilience as well as being well prepared for independent adult life. The children and young people are able to develop really strong relationships with the staff. They learn to trust adults again and learn how to act appropriately from the very good role modelling provided by the staff. The staff clearly understand the value of physical contact and place a high priority on ensuring that the children and young people get appropriate hugs and cuddles, help with hair brushing and other personal care. The children and young people benefit from a staff team who are skilled, knowledgeable and clearly very committed to providing the highest quality of care. The inspector was able to hear a number of conversations when staff were planning for the children and young people with care and attention to detail. The children and young people all make very good progress at this home and many of them make exceptional progress. The staff have systems in place for agreeing targets and goals with all the children and young people and every opportunity is taken to work towards these. The children and young people are encouraged by the staff to explore and find out about the world by trying a range of activities and new experiences. The experience of living in the home is also excellent. The children and young people feel safe, secure and are very well supported to grow and develop. The one young person who has moved on in the past year had progressed through horse racing college and now has full time employment in a stables. They had	

studied and obtained the right qualifications and had built up relevant experience very successfully. This was as a result of an interest that they were introduced to at this home and in which they were encouraged and eventually excelled.

A number of the children and young people are coming to terms with past trauma and abuse and they are helped to explore and talk about their emotions and feelings by staff in the home and by external specialist workers to whom they are referred.

Most of the children and young people are offered their education at the school run by the organisation although if they are able to cope with mainstream schooling they are able to attend or to move on to this when ready. School attendance is very high and the children and young people are very well supported to achieve good results. The young people are able to move on to external mainstream colleges when they reach the age of 16. The children and young people study for a range of practical and vocational qualifications alongside limited academic qualifications so that their confidence and self-esteem are built up first before moving on to a more expansive curriculum. This works very well. It is positive, nurturing and realistic and encourages excellent progress. Education packages are individual and are designed to ensure every child and young person has their needs met. For example, one young person struggles to concentrate for lengthy period and so has an individual timetable to suit and to encourage development.

The children and young people's health is well taken care of and staff demonstrate very good knowledge of their health needs and are able to action these appropriately. Several children and young people have complex health needs and these are managed well.

The children and young people take a full part in the day to day running of the home and also in their own personal care planning. They are given respect and responsibility by the staff and this helps them grow and develop.

One young person told the inspector how they had been in a number of other homes prior to coming here and how 'none of them were half as good as this one'. They went on to say they felt their 'life had been turned around', by coming to this home. One social worker spoken to was extremely complimentary about the home and said that the young person they had placed had made very good progress despite their very low starting point.

There is a strong emphasis on acquiring skills for independence and these form part of everyday life at this home. There is an expectation that children and young people help around the house and engage in positive activities and this expectation helps them develop into rounded adults who not only take a pride in themselves but also take care of others.

Most of the children and young people help care for the farm animals and the experience of looking after animals in all aspects of their lives creates respect for

life and an understanding of needs as well as a regard for the environment. Some of the animals on the farm have come from situations where they were not cared for properly and the children and young people who care for them here are able to understand about past abuse and then have the opportunity to compare that with their lives and situation. This does help build empathy and self-awareness. One young person with a history of severe abuse was benefitting from helping the most vulnerable animals.

The staff also support the children and young people to have as much contact with their families as is possible. They take great care to supervise this as much as is needed to keep the situation safe and they build this up over time as the child or young person wants. There are good examples when the staff are also highly supportive of parents in order to help maintain and develop better contact and family relationships.

The children and young people are encouraged to take part in many organised and structured activities away from the home. One young person is taking music and singing lessons, another attends a school youth club and another who loves horses has been on an organised riding holiday and is going with others to the Horse of the Year Show in London. The children and young people are able to take part in a wide variety of trips including two very successful holidays in the Lake District and North Yorkshire. One young person had been bought a fitness watch monitor and was proudly showing the inspector their 10,000 steps a day achievement which was part of a fitness and weight loss programme.

Activities around the farm include helping with the more serious aspects of animal husbandry and with the everyday work around farm maintenance. These are all well risk assessed and are highly supervised by qualified staff and by the farm manager who forms part of the staff team. Other staff are qualified in outdoor activities. This impressive range of activities undoubtedly builds confidence and interest and helps the children and young people acquire skills and knowledge. One young person went into great detail with the inspector about their work with the horses and the pigs. They clearly loved the work and got so much from it.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The children and young people living at this home are kept very safe. The staff at the home work to a model of care provided by the organisation. The children and young people who are admitted to this home all come from very vulnerable	

backgrounds and are all in need of significant protection.

The staff are excellent at assessing risk and are adept at putting clear practices in place to ensure further risks are minimised. The children and young people are all highly supervised and have agreed to work with the staff in this way. They are all kept very busy with educational, vocational and leisure activities and are all supervised closely until they are able to start having some free time away from staff. This approach works extremely well and the children and young people become increasingly safe over time.

There has been a low number of incidents when children and young people have been missing from home. On a couple of occasions over the past year young people have become angry or upset and walked away from the home without permission but they returned within an hour or two safe and well. The staff responded appropriately and in accordance with their care plans.

There has been no bullying at the home. A few fairly minor complaints have been dealt with openly and to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Some of the children and young people have come from backgrounds where they have experienced sexual exploitation. They are well protected from further concerns about this and are helped to understand that this type of exploitation is not normal and that there are clear rights and wrongs and that consent is always important. One young person has been supported well when they were contacted via the internet by older males and this situation was dealt with quickly and appropriately and has ceased. The only other safeguarding issue in the period since the previous full inspection was when staff appropriately referred a disclosure of past abuse made by one young person and this was followed up by safeguarding services and with staff support. Staff are well trained around issues of social media and online abuse and manage the use of the internet in the home safely.

The staff give all the children and young people very close supervision, clear boundaries and expectations. They mostly rely on the excellent relationships that have been built but do on occasions use sanctions to re-inforce positive behaviour. These are reasonable and appropriate. The staff also use physical interventions when required. Some of the children and young people at times find it hard to control their feelings and emotions and become angry and aggressive or resort to self-harm. Staff are knowledgeable and well trained in the use of physical interventions and all the interventions carried out are appropriate and reasonable. The number of physical interventions is not excessive and they do decline as children and young people settle at the home and start to deal successfully with their past difficulties.

The children and young people feel safe and secure at this home and some of them were able to confirm this directly with the inspector.

The staff have built an environment where the children and young people are free

form past pressures and abuse. They are able to regain their childhood in a closely supervised, highly nurturing and very positive environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager is experienced and appropriately qualified and ensures that the home meets the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose. The registered manager is very child centred and gives a high priority to the children and young people in his care. It was immediately clear to the inspector that the registered manager had really strong and positive relationships with all the children and young people. They look up to him and regard him as an important figure in their lives. He provides an excellent role model to them and to his staff. The staff also regard him as an excellent and approachable leader and in turn are supportive of him. The registered manager is very child focussed and demonstrates this in many ways. The inspector observed the moment when the children and young people came home from school. They all immediately went to the registered manager and he stopped what he was doing and gave them his undivided attention while they told him about their day and what they had been doing. He was full of praise and was genuinely interested in their achievements and activities. The records at the home are very thorough and the registered manager expects that his staff carry out this task with accuracy and attention to detail. He monitors all the work and care practices in detail and is able to provide on-going development. It was clear to the inspector that there had been a step up in performance from the registered manager over the past year and when asked he put this down to reflecting on work done and improving the service in many small areas. An example of this was when he had reflected on the increased number of physical interventions that had taken place with one child through the summer holiday. He has now put in place more routines and structure so that the child is able to handle the next school holiday better. He has the highest expectations of all his staff and has the highest aspirations for all the children and young people in his care. The registered manager has a vision of what is needed. He has the support of very clear guidance from the organisation and is able to ensure that all the children and young people maintain excellent progress. The staff team are all well trained and are all qualified. The registered manager	

ensures this training is ongoing and that support through supervision is always good quality.

The registered manager has built up a comprehensive network of supportive services and external specialist workers who he goes to when needed. One young person had just had a specialist assessment of their learning disabilities completed following an external referral and others attend sessions with external workers for work around issues of abuse, exploitation, emotional health and wellbeing, and around keeping safe. He demonstrated his ability to challenge others when required. He is confident, knowledgeable, assertive and understands what is required and how to achieve his goals. .

He is committed to the ongoing development of the service in order to provide the best possible care for the children and young people in his care.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection and none have been made at this inspection.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016