

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 or mental disorders.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 8 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The home's manager demonstrates strong leadership qualities. He leads his staff team by example. This means that the young people receive a high standard of care that is nurturing and consistent.
- The home's manager is highly aspirational for the young people. He encourages the staff team to engage the young people in a range of experiences. There are plans to take one young person on a theatre trip and another young person is to have an overseas trip.
- The home's manager has high expectations of his staff team. He ensures that they are appropriately supported via training opportunities and regular supervisions. He also encourages reflective discussion to take place within team meetings.
- The home's practice has a clear model of working that involves close supervision of the young people. This is based on a robust risk assessment. It is also balanced by allowing young people to spend independent time away from the home to access hobbies, interests and spend time with friends. Some young people also enjoy planned visits to see friends and family that include overnight visits.
- The staff team works effectively with a range of professionals to ensure that young people are kept safe. When young people are deemed unsafe, the home's manager takes decisive action to mitigate risks.
- The young people have excellent relationships with the home's manager and staff team. Together, they spend quality time with each other. This includes eating at mealtimes, eating out and enjoying city breaks. This makes the young people feel secure and they identify one another as their extended family.
- The home is part of a working farm and young people take an active part in looking after the animals and undertake age-appropriate tasks within the home. This makes young people value their surroundings and reduces the risk of damage being caused.
- The home presents as warm and homely, with evidence of photographs and books displayed. Episodes of going missing from the home are not an issue of concern with the young people who currently live there.
- Each young person has made excellent progress in terms of health, education and development. This is taking into account their starting points.

The children's home's areas for development:

- To further strengthen the home's safeguarding culture, safeguarding should be included as a stand-alone agenda item within every staff member's supervision.
- The staff team to access training to understanding self-harming behaviours.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
07/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/12/2015	Full	Good

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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose, and understands the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and uses this understanding to inform the development of the quality of the care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (c))	30/03/2018

Recommendations

- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.14)

In particular, safeguarding to be included as a stand-alone agenda item in every staff member's supervision, including the manager's supervisions.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The young people receive a high standard of individualised care and are making excellent progress in terms of their education, health and development. For one young person, her target grades to achieve in her GCSEs have significantly increased. This has enhanced her confidence and self-esteem. She is now setting higher expectations for her own future.

The practice in the home is built on positive reinforcement. Young people are rewarded and praised for their achievements. A restorative approach to negative behaviours is applied. Sanctions used are based on individual assessments and as a result of reflective discussions taking place within team meetings. This means that sanctions are effective in achieving better outcomes for the young people.

The home is settled, with a well-established staff team that is committed to achieving good outcomes for the young people. There is one new member of staff who is enthusiastic and being supported through her induction. One young person has been admitted into the home since the last inspection following careful planning and detailed pre-admission assessments. Despite the placement being relatively new, the young person is making exceptional progress. A professional commented, '[Name]'s interpersonal skills have vastly improved since being at the home. She can be controlling and aggressive but the staff are aware and respond brilliantly. The staff can challenge her and it has proven that [name] actually has an ability to reflect and make better choices, which hasn't been seen before.'

The young people identify this as their home and a place where they like to spend time. One young person said, 'It's amazing here, really good. Best place I've ever been and it's been in the double figures. This is where I want to settle. I love it all and I love the horses.' Another young person said, '[Manager] is like a dad to me. He looks after me and makes sure I'm safe. I don't want to leave here.'

Each young person has an individual and comprehensive care plan and risk assessment. The young people are encouraged to contribute to their records and are provided with copies of their looked-after review reports. This helps young people to track their own progress and feel that they are able to contribute positively to the care that they receive.

The staff team and home's manager have excellent working relationships with a range of professionals and specialist services. One professional commented, 'They really understand the young people that they care for. These are very complex young people. They really support the young people and actually give the young people their time. With [name], there have been concerns with her mental health. The psychologist said they'd just done everything absolutely right to help her in a crisis situation. It's all positive intervention in this home.'

Due to the complexity of behaviours presented by some young people, the staff team would benefit from training to understand the range of self-harming behaviours. This would further strengthen the home's approach of working from an evidence-based perspective.

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

The young people who are admitted to this home come from very vulnerable backgrounds. Each young person is in need of significant protection. The members of the staff team are excellent at assessing risk. Their sound knowledge of each young person's vulnerability enables them to apply appropriate strategies to mitigate risks. A

relative commented, 'They do everything in their power to keep [name] safe. I have absolutely no concerns, she has matured so much since being there.'

Where there have been incidents of young people placing themselves at risk of harm, the home's manager has taken decisive action to safeguard that young person. He has also escalated concerns where it has been appropriate to do so. The manager's dynamic approach has improved the home's working relationship with the police. He is now participating in monthly Vulnerable Exploited Missing Trafficked (VEMT) meetings to ensure that preventative measures are taken to safeguard each young person.

The young people say that they feel safe and know that the staff put boundaries in place to protect them. This makes young people feel loved and valued. For one young person who had an episode of going missing from home, the staff team worked hard to prevent further occurrences. Strategies have been effective in safeguarding that young person.

When a new risk is identified, risk assessments are promptly updated. The manager is astute and recognises wider issues of risk, including radicalisation and exploitation. This helps to inform the reflective discussions within team meetings. The use of social media and the internet is carefully managed to enable young people to enjoy using it safely. The staff team has taken a rigorous approach to educate the young people around cyber risks. One young person who was deemed vulnerable to radicalisation online had specific work on the subject in one-to-one sessions to address concerns. There have been no further occurrences.

Safeguarding is a strong aspect of daily practice within the home. Rigorous assessing includes locality risk assessment, the home risk assessment, impact risk assessments, fire drills and individual risk assessments for the young people. Safeguarding is discussed in most supervisions and in the team meetings. To strengthen the home's safeguarding culture further, safeguarding could be included as a stand-alone agenda item in every staff member's supervision, including the manager's own supervision.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is experienced and appropriately qualified to fulfil the objectives as set out in the home's statement of purpose. He is supported in his role by a hard-working and dedicated staff team, along with a senior manager. The staff team works collectively with a shared focus. This is supported by the registered manager being innovative to improve outcomes for young people.

The registered manager leads by example and this means that the young people experience stability of care. He is confident in his ability to challenge other professionals with the aim of supporting young people and achieving good outcomes. A professional commented, 'The manager is just brilliant at making sure they provide a wraparound service to meet [name]'s emotional and educational needs.'

The registered manager recognises the importance of listening to the views, wishes and feelings of the young people. He creates opportunities for the staff team to acknowledge

and respond to the young people's wishes accordingly. This makes young people feel that they are respected.

Observations during this inspection are that the young people have a superb relationship with the home's manager and they enjoy spending time with him. When young people return home from school or college, they automatically seek him out to tell him about their day. The manager will go above and beyond his management duties and spend time with the young people on an individual basis outside of his managerial role. One young person described having an emotional outburst; she said, 'He's the best. He gave me the reassurances I needed. I just let it all out and then he gave me a hug and said it was going to be OK, and it was.'

The home's manager has excellent monitoring systems in place and he is meticulous about details and the accuracy of recording information. He has systems to review the practice of staff, including the use of physical interventions. The manager looks for themes and trends to improve practice and ensures that the staff team is equipped to manage the complex needs of the young people.

The manager has an ambitious vision to make further improvements to the home and this includes having an annex built on site for semi-supported living to help young people move on. During this inspection, the manager was welcoming of any comments made by inspectors to improve practice.

The registered manager has worked hard to accomplish excellent working relationships with a range of agencies and support services to ensure that the home's practice is in line with the 'Working together to safeguard children' protocol. A professional commented, 'The manager supports the staff and they all go above and beyond. [name] has made significant progress since being there.'

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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