

1155757

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to three children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 16/05/2017 to 17/05/2017

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 06/12/2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- The leadership and management are excellent. The registered manager has vision and is passionate about her work. She advocates strongly for the young people who live in the home. She is confident and leads by example. A model of

parenting is being followed which will support the high-quality care in place.

- The home’s statement of purpose explains the essential building blocks of its approach and what it aims to achieve, which is to provide a positive, stable environment. This offers young people a sense of belonging and security. The home develops young people’s understanding of significant relationships and patterns of behaviour. Staff are experienced and have a good knowledge of the young people that allows them to deliver safe, meaningful care in which they thrive during their placements. The registered manager and staff team are well trained in this model of care and they continue to improve their knowledge base through practice.
- The staff keep the children and young people safe. Risk assessments are of a very high quality and individual to identified needs and requirements. The quality of recording is excellent, and sharing of such information with other agencies is routinely accepted as very good.
- The children and young people enjoy living here. The relationships with staff are very good and are based on mutual respect and trust. The registered manager and her team ensure that contact is maintained through supportive relationships made with families and friends.
- Restraints have never been needed. The children and young people are settled, and behaviours associated with bullying are rarely seen. This is due, in the main, to clear expectations and good communication with the children and young people about boundaries and tolerance.
- The supervision and training of staff are good quality.

The children’s home’s areas for development

- The home needs to improve its delivery of independent life skills work to ensure that the children and young people are prepared for their next steps in life.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2016	Full	Good
25/04/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/11/2015	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
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(vi))</p> <p>In particular, encourage young people to follow consistent routines and undertake planned programmes of work.</p>	<p>29/06/2017</p>

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff team provides a high level of individualised support to children and young people. Information relating to their care needs is collected robustly, ensuring that bespoke plans are drawn up with clear goals and outcomes. Progress is monitored and updates to plans are completed. The level of care is promoted through case management meetings in the home. These are carried out regularly by a case manager and an identified key worker for each child and young person. This maintains 'live' plans that support the work that is carried out with them and reinforce continuity of care. This helps children and young people to reach targets and promotes their development, socially and mentally.

The home is warm and friendly. A parent stated: 'It is a lovely place. It is very home orientated.' Prior to the child's or young person's admission, a teddy bear and a card is placed in their room. Bedrooms are quickly personalised and staff take the child or young person shopping to get it just right for them. All bedrooms are equipped with ensuite facilities, which are in excellent condition. The home benefits from a spacious

garden with a planting area for vegetables, which the children and young people like. They also have a summerhouse, which the children and young people enjoy and which provides privacy where children and young people can enjoy time with their families, friends and social workers.

There is genuine warmth and respect between the staff and the children and young people. Laughter is shared and, when required, comfort and reassurance are provided. Views and wishes are gathered from the children and young people through a variety of methods, surveys, one-to-ones and individual sessions with a member of staff. Children's and young people's meetings take place, which they are encouraged to chair and minute. A sense of ownership and value is created, which also develops confidence and raises self-esteem. Menus are nutritious and discussed with the children and young people. A member of staff created a survey, which allowed children and young people to score a particular meal. This was a creative way of getting the children and young people to participate in making choices.

The children and young people are all attending education and training. One young person is making steps into independence with his apprenticeship. Encouragement and support are provided by the staff. On the day of inspection, due to unforeseen events, the young person was supported by the manager and staff so that he was able to attend his apprenticeship. This commitment to enable young people to understand the expectations of employers was a very good lesson, and the young person was happy to go.

Emotional health is supported by working with a range of health professionals. Staff are now engaged in the development of an overarching theoretical model of good parenting. Early signs are that the staff have embraced this approach and are implementing it in their daily practice. The support from educational psychologists and the manager have enabled change, which will support the overall experiences of the children and young people. This will support the nurturing environment and continue the good work that is already taking place.

One young person has moved on from the home since the last inspection. Unfortunately, even though the staff worked really hard to build a good and effective relationship to enable change to take place, this was not enough to safeguard the young person who was unable to sustain a safe lifestyle in the community around the home. An alternative placement was found. The manager and staff promoted the move positively for the young person. This illustrates the commitment and investment that the home provides to the children and young people to meet their individual needs.

The process for supporting young people to practise their independent life skills has only partly been met, and the requirement made at the last inspection has been repeated. Staff have been doing valuable work with the young people and have detailed, in part, work that has been done. It is clear that this needs to improve in its consistency and quality to ensure that the young people are prepared for their independence.

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

The staff gather essential information, historical and current, about the children and young people. This helps them to complete individual risk assessments that are of a consistently high standard. This attention to detail ensures that the assessments are regularly updated in response to any concerns or as a result of discussions relating to case management. This ensures that the staff are able to effectively keep the children and young people safe.

The children and young people have previously been exposed to risk, such as sexual exploitation and self-harm. The staff are well trained to manage these risks quickly and support the children and young people through one-to-one sessions. This work is always carried out in a sensitive manner. Risk assessments and 24-hour management plans detail strategies to support intervention. Partnership work with other agencies, such as the police, is effectively carried out. Sharing of intelligence ensures a quick response to risk-taking behaviours and is essential to safeguard the children and young people.

Return interviews are always carried out by an independent person. Information that is gathered is shared with the staff and care team members to reinforce plans and to update risk assessments. Members of staff follow children and young people when risk is significant and take steps to ensure that they are not put in harmful situations. This demonstrates to the children and young people that the staff who care for them will support and keep them safe. Relationships are strong in the home and resilience is promoted.

Incentives are provided to the children and young people to achieve agreed targets. This raises self-esteem and the value of respectful behaviour. All achievements are celebrated and staff are quick to recognise positive behaviour. Sanctions are very rarely used and the children and young people understand the home's boundaries and expectations. The atmosphere in the home is settled, and the children and young people are able to express themselves safely. The staff respond accordingly as a good parent would.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is experienced and is appropriately qualified. She is passionate about her work with the children and young people. She is committed to improving the work, which is based on a theoretical model of parenting. She demonstrates strong leadership and is supported by a very able assistant manager. The management team is knowledgeable and is able to challenge others when required. Relationships with professionals and families are good and are based on trust and respect. Communication is excellent and supported by a good quality of recording and sharing of information by all staff.

The staff team is provided with excellent supervision by a senior member of staff. Training has been provided on a model of parenting and the learning is reinforced through work with educational psychologists. This helps the management and staff team

to consider and see where different psychological theories fit into their practice. This empowers them to feel more confident in solving problems to support the children and young people to progress. One of the educational psychologists, who has worked with the staff team for some time, stated: 'I have found them to be a wonderfully committed group of professionals, who put things into place quickly following our consultation meetings. They are always full of ideas and want the best for each young person.'

The management team's monthly monitoring system is excellent and is completed in detail. This helps the manager to prepare her six-monthly reports, which are supported through good consultation with the children and young people. The independent person supports monthly monitoring, which helps to identify the children's and young people's progress as well as any areas for development. This supports the staff team's understanding and recognition of the good work that is carried out, enhancing morale and focus.

The home has a confidence that is measurable in its performance. An independent reviewing officer stated: 'I am very impressed with them. They have a very good reputation.' This standard of care provides professionals with the knowledge and security that the children and young people are supported in a stable and nurturing home, where they are able to progress in their emotional and behavioural development.

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 difference 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: 1155757

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

Responsible individual: John Young

Registered manager: Stephanie Scott

Inspector

Michael Dack, social care inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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