

1159884

Registered provider: Spark of Genius North East LLP

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider manages and operates this children's home. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children or young people who have behavioural and/or emotional difficulties.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 June 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 **Good**

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

Date of last inspection: 7 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- There are positive, effective relationships between the young people and the adults caring for them.

- The risk assessments are robust and enabling.
- The young people regularly contribute to their records.
- The young people make consistent progress from their starting points.
- The young people are happy and relaxed.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The training for staff needs to expand beyond the mandatory subjects to fully meet the needs of the young people who live at the home.
- The maintenance of the home requires improvement.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/07/2016	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
Case records must be kept— in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36 (2)(d))	31/08/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	31/08/2017
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) and (2)(c))	31/08/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact that the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards as described in Regulations 5 to 14. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, pages 64 and 65, paragraph 15.2.) In particular, wider consultation with families and others involved in the care of young people should be included in the review.
- Staff should be familiar with the home’s policies on record keeping and

understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people are relaxed and happy. They have caring, trusting relationships with the adults in the home, which are characterised by warmth and good humour. A young person said, 'The staff are the best part.'

The group of young people has changed significantly since the last inspection. Transitions in and out of the home have been well planned, when possible, and managed sensitively. The impact is that the young people have settled reasonably quickly when moving into the home. Young people who have moved on from the home do keep in touch with the staff until they reach a stage when this no longer meets their needs. This demonstrates that young people have developed a level of resilience that allows them to function in the community once they have left the home.

The young people contribute regularly to their care plans. They are involved, from the point of their admission to the home, in looking at their needs and aspirations for the future. Individual work is undertaken with their key worker and evidence is gathered to enable them to reflect on their journey and achievements. The visual result gives young people confidence and raises self-esteem in a safe and secure atmosphere. A social worker said, 'The home is fantastic. It is very proactive at meeting [Name's] needs and I can't fault it.'

Education is seen as important by the young people and the staff team. Most young people are in school, college or starting apprenticeships and work placements. When considering young people's starting points, their attendance is good overall. One young person who was a persistent absentee has been supported by staff on a daily basis and is now a regular attender. A school representative said, 'They do a fantastic job.'

All of the young people are healthy, eat well and attend routine or specific appointments, which they either go to alone, where this is age appropriate, or with staff. Sporting activities and those that assist with promoting good health, such as dance and health and beauty, are actively encouraged. Health needs are identified as part of the overall plan and good health is promoted regardless of the presence of diagnosed conditions. All of the young people are registered with local services and are encouraged to attend appointments to enable them to learn to manage their own physical well-being.

The home is comfortable and welcoming. However, the damage and need for replacement and decoration seen at the last inspection are still present and have

increased. A lack of quick, proactive response to such damage leaves young people feeling undervalued. A programme of decoration is due to start. Young people have actively contributed in terms of choice of colours and accessories. This will enable them to develop a sense of ownership and belonging but needs to be supported by staff to proactively address issues of damage as they arise.

The manager and staff understand the importance of contact with family and friends for young people. They promote and support contact well, either via transport or supervising the contact. Friends, family and professionals are welcomed in the home. A social worker said, 'They always make me feel welcome, keep me updated and have solid, good professional relationships with the young person.'

Consultation with young people and professionals is good. In addition, there are meetings with the group of young people, individual key working sessions and a questionnaire is used periodically to gather generic views about the home. One young person stated, 'It is a very nice home to live in. It doesn't feel like a care home.' However, consultation with families has been less successful and needs to be addressed.

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

The young people are, and identify that they feel, safe in the home. A young person stated, 'Staff help me feel safe.' Risk assessments clearly identify risk indicators and triggers as well as strategies for mitigating against the risk. Such assessments and care plans are updated regularly by staff, monitored by the management team and shared with other professionals.

Overall, episodes of going missing are high, particularly with recently admitted young people, but there is evidence that these are reducing as young people settle in the home. Staff are aware of the agreed processes to follow when young people go missing. They actively look for young people and encourage them to return safely. The result is that young people feel cared for.

Staff ensure that they quickly develop clear, consistent boundaries to enable young people to settle. The use of physical intervention is low, but when it is used it is appropriate to prevent harm. Records are clear and include comments from young people after the event. This allows young people to reflect on their emotions and how they have an impact on their behaviour. Sanctions continue to be used as a means of managing behaviour, but the home is adopting a more restorative approach. This, along with a balanced use of individual incentives, enables the young people to develop a positive view of themselves and what they are able to achieve.

There has been one complaint from a young person following a physical intervention, which was appropriately investigated. The young person was informed of the outcome and steps have been taken to address the practice issues and ensure the continued safety of young people.

Staff maintain regular contact with those professionals involved in the care of young

people. Updated information is shared at regular intervals. A social worker said, 'They are always available on the phone if I need to speak to them. They contact me almost daily with updates.'

Staff have responded quickly when necessary to keep young people safe from exploitation, but staff would benefit from more in-depth training in this area. This would allow them to be more effective in dealing with incidents as they occur.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager, who has been in post for the 15 months after the home opened, is suitably qualified and experienced in residential care. He is supported by a strong team of individuals including a residential manager and a deputy who contribute to the overall management team.

The management team has effective monitoring systems in place and audits the records and files regularly, giving staff feedback on their performance as key workers for the young people. It gathers data that visually highlights the progress made by individual young people and staff. Through the use of graphs and text that evaluate the data, it is able to demonstrate success and areas for development. This promotes a sense of achievement for all.

The home is highly staffed and resourced to meet the daily needs of the young people living there. This enables the young people to benefit from individual time with staff and reduces their anxieties when they need to attend appointments or go on activities. However, this needs to be matched by a strong knowledge base to enable staff to understand the underlying trauma suffered by young people and how this affects their behaviour and interactions.

Staff receive regular, effective supervision that challenges their practice and offers opportunities for reflection and learning. Team meetings underpin the wider aspects of the practice of the home and allow consistency to develop. The result is that young people settle quickly and are able to progress in one or more areas of their lives.

Recording, overall, is of a good standard and has improved since the last inspection. However, records and logs reviewed at the inspection demonstrate that there is not a consistent approach to categorising incidents. This needs to be addressed to ensure that the data gives a true picture of the events 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: 1159884

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Spark of Genius North East LLP

Registered provider address: King Edwin School, Mill Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS20 1LG

Responsible individual: Zak McIlhargey

Registered manager: Stephen McGill

Inspector

Susan Atkinson-Millmoor: social care inspector

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