

# 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.

The manager has been registered for one year.

**Inspection dates:** 11 to 12 February 2019

**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:** 6 June 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
06/06/2017	Full	Good
07/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/07/2016	Full	Good

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Recommendations

- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)  
In particular, the manager should ensure that staff are suitably trained to care for the children, by completing the level 3 diploma.

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children living in this home receive a good standard of care to meet their individual needs. The home is warm and welcoming. The children enjoy spending time in the home with the staff, cooking, watching TV and relaxing. The staff understand the importance of the children spending time with family and friends. They support the children to have independent time away from the home.

School attendance is good. The staff are skilled at helping the children to attend and achieve in education. A number of the children had very poor attendance prior to coming to live at the home. All now attend on a regular basis. This helps them to understand the importance of education and gives them confidence in their own abilities.

The staff enable the children to consider other people in the community and in the wider world. Fundraising activities and contributions to the community are wide-ranging. The children have recently raised funds for the Children's Heart Unit Fund. They had lots of fun taking part in the local village fete, running a stall with 'guess the name of the bear' and 'how many sweets in the jar?' activities. The takings were donated to a charity for children with additional needs. This reinforces a sense of belonging and enables the children to enjoy the benefits of seeing the impact they have and can continue to make.

Staff have listened to, and taken into account, the children's views in respect of the decor and furnishings of the home. The children and young people's bedrooms are personalised spaces that they are proud of and reflect their individuality. One child has recently helped to choose a new colour scheme for the home's kitchen and helped with the painting. This makes the children feel valued and listened to.

The children have developed age-appropriate independence skills, which have helped them to manage their personal care needs. They have become confident and are proud of their achievements. Progress is well recognised and rewarded. The 'golden ticket' rewards scheme works well. The children take an active part by designing and printing their own certificates. Staff have created a culture in which the children are praised and valued, which gives them a sense of being loved and nurtured.

The children benefit from numerous holidays. The staff show good understanding of each of the children's likes and dislikes. Together they design structured, fun and well-planned activities. There are lots of lovely photographs of holidays and activities on display around the home. Staff help the children to compile personal development plans, memory boxes and files. These give the children memories to cherish and develop their self-worth. Children take responsibility and benefit from keeping pets. This enables them to care for, love and look after animals, helping them develop emotional warmth and empathy.

Although there have been a significant number of changes to the staff team since the last inspection, this has not unduly affected the consistency of care.

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

The children said they feel safe. Staff understand the need for the children to become independent. They help them to understand risk and how to keep themselves safe. Children are helped to manage their own behaviours and regulate their responses. This means that they are able to manage their behaviours and feelings in an effective and confident way.

Staff work hard to provide a safe place to live. They have a clear understanding of the children's needs. Well-written, clear risk assessments and behaviour management plans are developed with the in-house clinical psychologist. This enables the children to stay safe inside and outside of the home. Consistent boundaries in the home safeguard the children effectively.

The number of missing episodes from the home is decreasing. The staff are aware of the risks to children when they are away from home and make clear efforts to minimise such risks. They make sure that the children are aware of what they will do in each circumstance to improve safety. This means that consistent messages are given to them, helping to reinforce the need to keep safe and make good choices. The use of sanctions is minimal and is counterbalanced by incentives and rewards for positive behaviour. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant decrease in the use of physical intervention. This is a result of work undertaken by the manager. She completed an analysis of physical intervention, which included speaking to the children, staff and the in-house psychologist. This led to a report and action plan, setting out training and development for the whole staff team. This has helped staff to have more confidence in their practice and to implement effective de-escalation techniques.

Staff understand the children's therapeutic needs. They work closely with social workers and the in-house clinical psychologist. This ensures that care plans are personalised to the needs of the children. The use of child-friendly 'my personal plans' and 'action plans' means that children are able to understand and participate in their plans. This helps them to gain self-confidence and security.

Key-worker sessions are used effectively to help the children to understand how to keep themselves safe. The staff demonstrate a good understanding of the risks that the children take and why. This leads to proportionate and warm responses from the staff. This helps the children to benefit from their experiences.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager has a strong commitment to improving outcomes for the children. Since her appointment she has driven improvements, resulting in positive outcomes for the children. She leads a team of staff who have high aspirations for the children and have a good understanding of their needs. The staff are passionate and motivated in the care and support that they provide.

An area of strength in the home is the work that the staff do in partnership with others. There is evidence of effective partnership working with education and health. Professionals spoken with confirmed this and complimented the staff team for its professionalism and commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for all the children. Another strength is the work with families, where they are encouraged to contribute and be part of children's lives as appropriate. A family member said, 'The staff are great. I have no problems at all with them. I couldn't ask for better. My child seems calmer and less anxious, which is lovely to see. It's a worry off my mind that they are keeping him safe.'

The in-house psychologist works closely with the staff, providing consultation training and support. This helps the staff to gain insight and understanding of the children's previous experiences of trauma, enabling them to provide knowledgeable, effective planned care for the children.

Staff benefit from regular, reflective and supportive supervision. The manager has improved and strengthened the staff induction programme. Staff spoken with felt valued, motivated and well supported. Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover within the staff team, including a new senior and deputy manager. A number of the new staff have little previous experience in residential care. They are undergoing a thorough induction; however, they would benefit from completing a level 3 diploma. The manager should ensure that they are enrolled on and are supported to complete this qualification, to ensure that they are suitably trained to carry out their role.

The manager knows the children well. She spends time with them on a daily basis. This ensures that she has a very clear understanding of their needs, behaviour and the progress that they are making.

## **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:** Sarah Redfern

## Inspector

Dot McGough, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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