

# 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

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for five children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The suitably qualified and experienced manager registered with Ofsted on 23 March 2020.

### Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2023

**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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

**Date of last inspection:** 24 January 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2022	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Good
11/02/2019	Full	Good
06/06/2017	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are welcomed into the home after a period of introductions to the staff, children already living there and their new environment. Children's experiences of moving into the home are positive, as the manager carefully considers information about children before they move in. This helps children settle into their new home.

The children feel listened to and know how to complain. Staff have completed work to support children to understand the role of an advocate and are proactive in supporting children to take on an advocacy role for children with care experience.

Children do well in their education and are making good progress. Staff support the children to attend their educational provisions regularly and show an interest in supporting the children's progression. Staff support children who aspire to attend university to secure courses and accommodation in line with their care plans.

Children are supported to develop their independent living skills in preparation for leaving care. The provider has formulated a new independent living plan with input from the children. This benefits children, as they can contribute to what skills they wish to develop that they may need at different stages in their lives.

Staff encourage children to actively participate in developing new aspects of their service, such as the reward systems and how these are recorded. Staff seek out and listen to children's views to ensure children are involved in day-to-day decision-making about their home and care arrangements.

Staff support children to spend time with their families and people who are important to them. Children are supported to contribute to decision-making about these arrangements as staff speak with them to gain their views. This helps the children to keep links with their family and friends, and this supports their identity.

The staff support children to have a planned end to their time living with them.

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

Children say they feel safe in their home and are cared for well by the adults who look after them. Staff supervise children in the home when risk assessments identify this is necessary. However, safety planning for children does not always accurately reflect risk in relation to children and how best to reduce or manage it. Although staff regularly update risk assessments in relation to children, there is no analysis to say why an area of risk has decreased or increased for a child. This leads to uncertainty about how children's behaviours are being managed safely in the home and community.

Risks in relation to children are discussed in team meetings and staff supervision sessions. This provides a platform for safeguarding concerns to be discussed and suitable training to be identified. When training is made available, it is not always provided at a level that is needed for staff to widen their understanding sufficiently to feel secure in their knowledge.

Staff understand procedures to follow when children are missing from home. They actively look for children and keep agencies and family members updated of a child's whereabouts. Return home interviews are offered to children, and the registered manager has oversight of any incidents of concern. This supports children to understand that there are procedures in place to keep them safe and reduces further incidents.

The use of physical interventions in the home is recorded and monitored and is only used after other strategies to de-escalate behaviours have been tried. Any incidents of physical intervention are detailed in children's records. The registered manager and area manager have oversight of any incidents of intervention to ensure safe practice by their staff.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and has experience working with children. Not all staff hold the required qualification to help them to deliver high-quality services to children. Leaders and managers did recognise this shortfall when this was discussed with them. There are appropriately qualified staff who provide peer support, and this helps provide care that is child-focused and helps to support decisions in the child's best interests. Leaders and managers need to ensure that training is provided that is focused on staff attaining the relevant qualifications and skills to meet the needs of children in their care.

Managers do not actively seek assessment of the children's needs from the local authority to help them better understand how to meet some children's needs. Managers and leaders need to challenge placing local authorities more effectively and scrutinise information more thoroughly when risks are documented in referrals about children. This will better help them to complete their impact risk assessments before a child moves in and consider the effect of a new child joining the home on all children.

Leaders and managers are developing innovative ways of working with children to improve and support children's transition into independence. The managers and staff work alongside children to develop their independent learning plans.

Leaders and managers hold regular supervision, team meetings and training. This provides an environment for staff to reflect on the children's experiences and their training needs. The support provided to the team allows staff to develop their practice and gives them an opportunity to share knowledge to better meet the needs of children in their care. The staff team acts as a supportive network for each

other and has provided positive feedback about their managers and the support provided.

Leaders and managers listen to children and provide a platform for them to express their views through children meetings and in informal settings. When complaints are made, these are dealt with in collaboration with the children to provide them with assurance that they have been listened to and understood. Feedback given to children about their worries is not always documented to show how an issue has been resolved.

## 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, the 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 care planning standard is that –</p> <p>children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if—</p> <p>the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1) (2)(e)(i))</p>	16 March 2023
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v))</p> <p>This specifically relates to children's risk assessments.</p>	16 March 2023
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p>	16 March 2023

<p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(c))</p>	
<p>Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met. In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; and</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to challenging local authority risk assessments of children and safety planning.</p>	<p>16 March 2023</p>

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. This should include training specific to the individual needs of the children, specifically sexually harmful behaviour. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** Stephen McGhee

**Registered manager:** Paul Owens

## Inspector

Joanne Wallis, Social Care Inspector  
Sue Atkinson-Millmoor, Regulatory Inspection Manager



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