

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 organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 August 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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 15 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2023	Full	Good
24/01/2022	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Good
11/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who move into the home are welcomed by a caring staff team. The staff take time to get to know each child's likes and interests. Staff use this knowledge to provide a personalised programme of support to the children. This helps children to settle into their new home quickly.

Children enjoy a range of activities, both in the home and the community. The children and staff organised a summer sports day, where children past and present took part. Children enjoy holidays of their preference, both in the UK and abroad.

Staff are strong advocates for children's rights. They consult with children to seek their views, wishes and opinions and use these views to ensure that children's care is individualised. Children value this, and as a result, they develop trusting relationships with the staff team. One child said, 'I wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't moved to the home.'

Children take an active role in reviewing their plans. They spend time with their key workers each month to review what they have accomplished and plan what they would like to achieve in the future. This helps children to feel in control of their future and learn skills that are important to them. For example, one child who is moving to university has recently passed their driving test.

Staff support children with their physical and emotional health. Children are encouraged to learn how to access health services independently. When children are ready, staff teach them how to safely manage their own medication. This helps to prepare children for when they move on from the home.

Children are making good progress in their education. Staff help children to overcome barriers that stop them from attending school. As a result, all of the children now attend schools or colleges and are enrolled on courses that are meaningful for their future goals.

Children spend time with their friends and family members. They invite their friends to their home, where they are able to join in with activities and sleep over. When children need support to build or maintain relationships with their loved ones, staff ensure that this is provided in a meaningful and sensitive way. One family member said, 'Everything the staff do is amazing. They [the child] love living there.'

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

Children are supported by staff who understand their vulnerabilities. Children's risks are carefully considered and managed by the staff team. Staff complete a monthly review of risks to children and ensure that the risk assessments are updated with any changes. This enables the children to take positive risks and develop their

independence in a safe and well-managed environment.

Children who go missing from home are supported by a staff team that understands how to respond. Staff will continue to look for children until they are located, whether that is during the day or at night. When children return, they are welcomed home and cared for by the staff. This helps children to feel safe and valued.

Children's positive behaviour is rewarded, and incentives are available to encourage children to maintain that positive behaviour. When children do become angry or upset, staff use their knowledge of the children to help them become calm. The staff consistently adopt this approach, which is effective in teaching children good values. This helps children learn how to manage their emotions and understand the benefits of positive behaviour.

The home has received one complaint since the last inspection. This was properly investigated, and the complaint outcome was fed back to the relevant parties. The manager reviewed the practices relating to this complaint and developed better working relations with the local community. This has prevented any further complaints, as residents and the local community feel listened to. Children are encouraged to have a sense of community and respect their neighbours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager and his deputy are passionate about the care that children receive. Together, they support children to achieve their potential and recognise their progress and achievements. One child said, 'The manager and deputy are like my friends; they have my back and that's very reassuring.'

The manager recognises the importance of consulting with the staff. He provides regular opportunities for the staff team to meet and review the effectiveness of the children's care. Staff are also able to share their ideas about how the home can better meet the needs of the children. One staff member said, 'The management team are great. They welcome our ideas and seek our views.'

Professionals and other agencies regard the managers as effective and efficient. This is because the manager and his deputy have developed positive working relationships with other agencies that are involved in supporting the children. The managers work openly and transparently with other professionals to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time. The manager confidently challenges other agencies when they do not meet the needs of the children.

The manager completes a six-monthly review of the home. However, despite capturing the views of children, these do not feature in the report. This is a missed opportunity for the manager to demonstrate how children's views are influencing the development of the home.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that senior staff have the relevant skills and knowledge of the home's safeguarding procedures. This could result in staff not

taking appropriate action when safeguarding incidents arise. Furthermore, senior staff do not receive adequate safeguarding training to equip them to undertake their duties. This shortfall has not directly impacted on the care that children have received.

The manager completes an assessment of children's needs before they move into the home. However, the training identified to enable staff to meet those needs is not always provided in a timely way. This hinders the staff's ability to fully understand the needs of all of the children.

Leaders and managers have not made suitable arrangements for staff to achieve their required qualifications. Several staff members have significantly exceeded the relevant date for completing their qualification. Managers have not taken action to challenge the training providers. As a result, staff have not received the service they require to achieve their qualification.

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 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>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that senior staff have the knowledge and skills to undertake their safeguarding duties.</p>	23 September 2023
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p>	23 December 2023

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level Diploma"); or

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home.

(Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and they 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, such as on autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the children's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

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

Beth Forster, Social Care Inspector

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