

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	04/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC033467
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	St Cuthberts Care
Registered person address	St. Cuthberts House, West Road, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE15 7PY

Responsible individual	Mrs Sheila Errington
Registered manager	Mrs Gail Lamb
Inspector	Mr Colin Imrie

Inspection date	04/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC033467

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The management of the home is strong and the manager leads the staff team well. The home is well organised and effective and offers good structure to both staff and children and young people
- The staff team are motivated and enthusiastic. They have a great deal of experience and work together well to provide a consistent and caring service
- Children and young people do make good progress in all areas of their lives. A number of young people were doing very well with their preparation for independence and others had settled well after significant trauma in their early lives.
- Children and young people are supported to attend education well, where they make good progress. Some of the children who have recently taken exams are predicted to get good results
- Children and young people are kept safe and are supported to become more independent as they grow up
- A number of the young people have chosen to attend church and take an active part in practicing their religious beliefs and staff have supported them well

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard with particular reference to ensuring that appropriate key work and life story work sessions take place following significant incidents or to deal with significant issues the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(b)(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as is recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking into account the child's background.	06/11/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

Ensure that the home works in close partnership with the child's local authority. In particular to challenge and escalate any concerns that there may be. (The guide to the Quality Standards, page 11 paragraph 2.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 8 children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD)

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
16/02/2015	CH - Full	Good
21/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
06/06/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
The children and young people do make good progress. Some of the placements are long term and these young people have made continuing progress. All of the children and young people have very good school attendance and most of the young people are achieving significantly good reports and are predicted to get good exam passes. Health needs are given a high priority and all the young people have up to date health checks and appointments. Because the home offers a calm and structured environment the children and young people who have come from difficult situations are able to settle and form good relationships with the staff. One young person who found relationships with adults very difficult when he first arrived is now able to give and receive hugs and appropriate physical contact easily. Staff are caring and go out of their way to offer good basic care. Some young people have been referred to external professionals for specific psychological support and this has had a positive impact. The children and young people are consulted about a range of issues. They are able to pick individual menus according to their liking and they are able to choose a range of activities. Children and young people are also able to have a say in the decoration of their bedroom. It is clear that young people are consulted about a range of issues to do with their care. They have their own files where they are able to contribute to care planning and identifying their goals and targets. One young person has been keen to be able to move to a foster placement and this is now being planned. Other young people are working towards a return home and again they play a full part in this planning. This demonstrates that staff and other professionals listen to these children and young people and work with them well. Some of the young people have chosen to attend church at various times and staff have fully supported them to attend when they have wanted. This has been an important issue for several of the young people. Children and young people are fully supported to maintain contact with their families wherever possible and staff have drawn up clear plans for doing this. There is a strong emphasis in the home of preparing the children and young people for independence. Staff support them to practice a wide range of skills and clear plans are in place to action this and to monitor progress. One young person has been able to become much more independent recently gaining sufficient confidence and competence to be able to use public transport to visit home which is some considerable distance away. Initially staff supported this young person to travel to family contact sessions and have gradually withdrawn	

once the young person was happy to do this alone. Another young person is able to use public transport safely to get to work experience and to other community based leisure activities. This young person is actively engaged in doing voluntary work at a city farm which they really enjoy and which is a good preparation for work. Another young person attends army cadets regularly and now has realistic aspirations of joining the armed forces.

One social worker commented that he thought staff 'were doing an excellent job', helping a young person settle well. He went on to say that this young person had significant attachment difficulties and that staff have worked well to address these issues. He said the young person had had 'lots of support'.

One parent said that staff 'were brilliant' and another comment that she was really pleased with the progress her daughter had made, saying 'she has matured greatly'.

Children and young people spoken to said they were happy at the home and that they felt safe.

A requirement has been made around doing key work and life story work with the children and young people. Although some of this work has been done there have been a number of areas where this has not been completed in sufficient depth. Work with one young person around moving into foster placement has not been particularly thorough. Other work with all young people around their families and other significant events in their lives could also be more in-depth.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Children and young people are generally kept very safe at this home. Staff understand and identify risks very well. They make good assessments of any risks and put good measures in place to minimise these risks. One of the strengths of the home is that the staff put in very clear boundaries and that they are very clear about their expectations of behaviour. This clarity and structure offers children and young people an environment where they supported to become increasingly safe and where they are able to learn to control their behaviour and are able to move safely to increased independence. One young person who was described by his social worker as emotionally traumatised on his admission has been able to settle down extremely well and now rarely shows any challenging behaviour. Another young person who had significant challenging behaviour around his need	

to be in control has been able to settle and has now been able to stop much of his aggressive behaviour. This progress has been due to staff taking a firm, consistent and caring approach. These two young people will be able to develop well and achieve better because of this work.

None of the children and young people who currently live at the home have gone missing since the last inspection.

However one child who has recently left did go missing on a number of occasions. Staff tried very hard to keep this young person safe by following him and trying to engage him but they were unable to prevent him leaving the premises and making attempts to meet family members. This child was discharged and moved to other accommodation in order to prevent further episodes of missing from home. Independent return interviews were carried out on these occasions, with this child, but the content of the reports was not shared with the home. A recommendation has been made for the manager to escalate these, or other, concerns should they arise again.

Staff have not used restraint other than on one occasion when one child was held for his own safety for a few seconds. Staff prefer to rely on a combination of positive rewards, praise and negotiation along with some reparation work and a minimal use of sanctions. This approach works well and young people say that staff treat them fairly.

There have been a few occasions when children and young people have bullied others. These have been minor instances and they have been dealt with immediately and thoroughly by staff and issues have been quickly resolved. The home has now won an award for its work around bullying.

There has been on incident where a member of staff was moved from the home following an incident where he was untruthful and where his practice was poor. No child or young person complained but other staff used the whistle blowing mechanism positively and the management were able to deal with this quickly. The manager did notify the appropriate services. This incident was relatively minor but does demonstrate strong management and also that staff are confident in their manager and confident in the whistle blowing procedure. This is positive and means that children and young people are very well safeguarded. When spoken to by the inspector, staff were knowledgeable and confident about safeguarding procedures and had received good training

	Judgement grade
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The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The manager is experienced and is a strong and effective leader who has organised the running of the home well. She has now been in post for over two and a half years and has recently completed a level five leadership and management diploma qualification. The deputy manager is also very strong and experienced. Both the manager and her deputy manager clearly put the needs of the children and young people first and are clearly child centred. Placement plans are in place for all the children and young people and these are updated regularly with progress. These and the other recording are of a good standard One of the most impressive things about the home is the level of communication and understanding between the team. All the staff spoken to during the inspection commented on the good communication that happens between staff and managers and said how much this helps them offer a consistent approach to the children and young people. Staff meetings are regular and lengthy and the manager uses this time well, to discuss individual needs of the children and young people in depth and to agree how best to approach them and work with them. Children and young people clearly do make good progress over time. A number of them have arrived at the home traumatised and with significant challenging behaviour and they do settle and do mature. This is clearly because of the good levels of staff support and nurture and because of the consistent care they receive. The manager monitors this progress well although says she would like to develop this aspect of the work. The manager also plans to do more work around aspirations and helping children and young people to aim high. Staff talk highly of the manager and say she is supportive and approachable. Staff are all given regular supervision and the content of this is good. Staff are all up to date with their mandatory training and many other training courses are taken by the staff. Staff have had recent training in child sexual exploitation. The manger is clear about she wishes to continue to develop the home and has compiled a new and thorough development plan. She understands the strengths of the home and wishes to develop other areas. Both the manager and deputy have demonstrated that they can be decisive and take action to address any issues arising. A recent poor practice issue was dealt with efficiently and referrals are carefully scrutinised and assessed to ensure places are only offered to children and young people who are likely to fit in with existing residents The home is achieving its aims and objectives as set out in its statement of purpose.	

The manager is able to challenge social workers and other professionals from local authorities and other professional organisations and has done this. However in a couple of instances the manager has not received information when she has asked. A recommendation has been made that the manager should escalate these concerns quicker and to more senior managers in order to get a better response.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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