

SC033467

Registered provider: St Cuthbert's Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a charitable organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to eight children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 September 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 **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: 15 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:

- The leadership and management is excellent. The registered manager has worked hard to improve the service. She is an excellent role model whose priority is always the children and young people. She is organised and effective in what she does. The staff team is being very well supported with good quality

training and supervision. More in-depth work is being carried out by the staff, and more referrals to external specialists and professionals are supporting the children and young people better. The service is developing because of the registered manager's commitment and enthusiasm.

- The home is a nurturing environment where the children and young people have a good experience. They are able to develop excellent relationships with the staff, and this enables them to make good progress in their lives.
- The children and young people at the home are kept safe. Risk assessments are good quality and staff take appropriate action to ensure that risks are minimised.
- Appropriate boundaries and expectations are in place and work well. The staff use appropriate sanctions and rewards to promote positive behaviour and to discourage negative behaviour.
- Care planning is good. All the children and young people have clear plans in place and have identified goals and targets to work towards.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Not all the children and young people have an appropriate education placement and consequently attendance is erratic. The staff team needs to challenge the situation on behalf of children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/08/2016	Full	Good
25/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/08/2015	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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8(2)(a)(x)) In particular, to ensure that every child of school age has a full-time education placement that fully meets their educational needs.	05/11/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and young people at this nurturing home have a very good experience and they do make good progress.

All the children and young people have lived in the home on a long-term basis. However, there have clearly been some challenging behaviours and some difficult incidents, which the staff have had to deal with.

The children and young people have particularly good relationships with the staff. The atmosphere at the home is relaxed and light hearted. Hugs and cuddles are in plentiful supply. Many of the children and young people are struggling to deal with significant and traumatic difficulties in their lives, so challenging behaviour, angry outbursts and upsets are fairly regular occurrences. The staff understand these and are able to offer comfort when required or firm boundaries when they are required. This combination of care and nurturing combined with clear expectations and boundaries works well and means that the children and young people feel safe and secure in the home.

One young person who clearly has very good, trusting relationships with staff has been able to be open with them about their thoughts and feelings. In talking about themselves and their current situation, they are being well supported through a difficult time.

Another young person wrote the following (reproduced in their words) in their reply to an Ofsted confidential survey. It perhaps sums up the relationship this young person enjoys with the staff:

'The staff care for us and love us and make us there family and I wouldn't change this for the world and if they could do something better they couldn't because they do everything by the book [I mean everything]'.

The children and young people make good progress. Most of them attend school very well and are achieving or starting to achieve more in their education. One young person who had a period of being out of work or training or education after they finished their compulsory education has now found a job and is doing well. They are now contemplating a college placement as well as working part-time, and this is positive.

One young person does not have a full-time school timetable at the moment as they are in a temporary alternative education arrangement. Staff now need to challenge the education system further in order to ensure that this young person has a suitable education placement going forward.

The quality of individual and personalised work is improved. The staff team has undertaken additional training around attachment and trauma. As a result, individual key-worker sessions are of greater benefit to children and young people. The staff team works well with external specialist services. Several of the young people are doing work around keeping safe and personal relationships, and others are doing more in-depth work about families and the past. The provider organisation has also arranged a number of workshops, which some of the young people from this home have been able to attend. One of these was on child sexual exploitation awareness and another was on breast awareness. These are all positive developments and provide good education and information to the children and young people attending.

All of the children and young people have a say in the running of the home. They are consulted individually and as a group regularly. The decoration of the home was picked by some of the young people, and activities and trips out are regularly suggested and then organised. The provider organisation has also started a regular children's council where the young people can attend without staff from the home and have their say about their care. There is also clear evidence that children and young people are fully involved in their own care planning. They each have their own file of records containing care plans and placement plans written in a child-friendly format.

The children and young people are healthy and attend appointments when necessary. Older young people are encouraged to manage this themselves. The staff have worked with health professionals to monitor the health of one child when doctors changed their medication. The children and young people are referred to the child and adolescent

mental health service where appropriate.

All of the children and young people have some contact with their families, but many of these relationships are difficult for them to maintain or develop. The staff have worked hard with the children and young people and their families to promote better contact and to resolve issues as they arise. One family carer stated that they were 'really impressed with staff' and found them to be caring and nurturing.

All the children and young people are expected and encouraged through incentives to help around the house with chores and day-to day-jobs. As a result, the children and young people begin to acquire independence and life skills from an early age, and this works well. The inspector enjoyed homemade scones baked by one young person during the inspection. Planning for independence is evident for the older young people, and the manager is in the process of creating a semi-independent bedsit within the home for one young person to move into. This is another positive development.

Many of the children and young people have outside interests, and staff are quick to encourage these. One young person attends the sea cadets and another attends a local girls' group. One young person spends a lot of time at a local stable riding, helping out and helping others. Another young person is involved in a local American Football team. The children and young people were talking to staff about arranging another charity coffee morning where they would bake and then sell cakes, after a previous successful event. The children and young people are also encouraged to maintain outside relationships with their local and school friends where this is appropriate. These activities all help build confidence and allow the children and young people to develop social skills and life skills, as well as have fun and keep active.

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

The children and young people are kept safe at this home. There is no doubt that they feel safe and secure and they have excellent trusting relationships with staff.

The risk assessments are up to date and are changed when needed. One example of this is a risk assessment that stated that the young person should be followed if they left the premises without permission. However, it was found that this made the situation worse so it was changed. Episodes of being missing from home have now decreased for this young person.

One young child who would be at risk if they were to leave the premises on their own when they are angry is stopped by staff using low-level physical interventions. The child is then offered counselling and diversionary activities. This works well and the child is kept safe.

The staff team uses sanctions regularly, but also have reward and incentive schemes in place. Both ways of working are effective in promoting positive behaviour and in discouraging negative behaviour. Some of the rewards are instant and some are built up over time depending on the child or young person involved. This way of working ensures

that the children and young people develop an understanding of boundaries and expectations.

There have been safeguarding concerns with some of the children and young people when they have been missing from the home. Staff do report such incidents correctly and make good efforts to locate and return children and young people. One young person puts themselves at risk while being away from the home by using the internet inappropriately. The staff have dealt with this well and have reported concerns about possible child sexual exploitation to the correct agencies. They have also taken measures to supervise this young person more closely. The staff have also worked closely with the family of another young person when they have gone missing to establish their whereabouts and to ensure that they return safely to the home.

Because staffing levels are high and because staff are very well engaged with the children and young people, they get the attention and support they need. Therefore bullying is not a problem in this home. Although there are inevitable tensions and squabbles, staff help and support the children and young people to deal with these issues positively.

There have been some concerns around young people self-harming. These have mostly been at the less serious end of the spectrum. However, staff have taken the issues seriously and have dealt with them positively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is an experienced and well-qualified manager. She has ensured that the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose are met.

The registered manager has been steadily developing the service and has made further significant improvements over this inspection period. She is a hands-on manager, but now takes time to step back more and look at the bigger picture. She understands the strengths of her staff team and uses these to improve the home effectively. She has grown in confidence and has developed care practices that are more influential in changing the lives of the children and young people living in the home. She is an excellent role model and is now more challenging of her staff. Over time she has changed the culture in the home so that staff are now more proactive in their approach.

This change in culture has been brought about by the registered manager being clear that staff needed to be able to have a more in-depth understanding of their needs and to develop their knowledge and skills to meet the needs of children and young people more effectively. She has improved the training plan and included more training around attachment and trauma. Supervision is more in-depth and encourages more positive and proactive ways of working. The staff have been encouraged to have higher aspirations and expectations for the children and young people, and this is leading to improvements in their lives. The staff have responded, and the quality of the direct work they do with the children and young people is improved. Members of the staff team stated that they are more consistent in their approach and that communication is improved. Staff say

that they are praised when they do well and say that they are supported when they find the work more challenging.

The registered manager has also maintained high standards of care planning, record keeping and monitoring. In addition, she has ensured that external specialist workers are brought in more frequently to do specific pieces of work. This means that the children and young people are benefiting from additional support and guidance, and they are able to make better progress. Both the registered manager and one of the deputy managers are challenging the education authority in relation to the school placement of one young person. This is in conjunction with the placing social worker and is progressing.

There has also been support from the responsible individual and the provider organisation who have limited the number of admissions to the home in order to allow the children and young people living at the home time to settle.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. At this inspection, one requirement has been made to improve the education experience of one young person.

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: SC033467

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: St Cuthbert's Care

Registered provider address: St. Cuthbert's House, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE15 7PY

Responsible individual: Sheila Errington

Registered manager: Gail Lamb

Inspector: Colin Imrie, social care inspector

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