

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033467
Inspector	Bill Drumm
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 Tyne & Wear NE15 7PY
Responsible individual	Sheila Terese Errington
Registered manager	Gail Lamb
Date of last inspection	21/01/2014

Inspection date	16/02/2015
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good home. It is well managed and effective in helping to keep children and young people safe. They enjoy good relationships with the staff team that are based on warmth and mutual respect. Staff provide good role models and work hard to maintain their relationships with the children and young people in their care, particularly at times of conflict or discord. Staff recognise this as being of crucial importance in helping children and young people to develop good behaviour and to mature into responsible adults.

The safety and welfare of children and young people is promoted. They are protected from harm and rarely go missing or absent without authority.

The home is well managed. There is good leadership from the manager which effectively directs the way the home works. Quality assurance systems used by the manager and the home's external visitors is of good quality and promotes overall improvements in the standard of the care provided. The home recognises its own strengths and weaknesses and has a clear development plan in place to continue making progress.

The health and well-being of children and young people is well supported and the home ensures that they receive the healthcare, treatment and support they need

when they need it. Contact between children and young people and their families, friends and relatives is, where appropriate, supported and supervised by the staff team. Young people who are nearing the time when they must move on from the home are supported by staff to learn activities for daily living in a clear and well-ordered manner. However, not all young people have a clear and robust pathway plan in place to aid their transition into adulthood.

All children and young people are provided with good support for their education and staff have high aspirations for their future. Staff work hard to promote attendance and achievement at school or college. This is successful with all children and young people engaged in formal education. This will help them to achieve their full potential.

Areas identified for improvement relate to: pathway plans for young people who are nearing adulthood; the clarity of care planning documentation and the ability of all children and young people to fully understand the contents of their plans and the effective contribution staff make to the review of individual placement plans and statutory reviews.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is provided by a charitable organisation and cares for up to eight young people aged 10 to 17 years old. It is registered to care for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2014	Interim	good progress
06/06/2013	Full	good
27/11/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
13/08/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure children understand, within their level of understanding, the purpose and content of their plan and the reasoning behind any decisions about their care NMS 25.1
- contribute to the development of each child's care plan, including pathway plan for "eligible" care leavers and works collaboratively with the young person's social worker or personal adviser in implementing the plan NMS 12.2
- contribute effectively to each child's placement plan review and statutory review of the child's care plan. NMS 25.3

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people living at the home make progress in many areas of their lives. All are engaged in formal education. For some, this is the first time they have attended school for a significant period of time. Staff have high aspirations for all those in their care. They fully support, promote and encourage attending education with all achievements, no matter how small celebrated. This helps to ensure that all children and young people have a positive attitude toward education and are able to achieve their maximum potential.

Children and young people's health also improves while they are at the home. They all have access to primary healthcare services and any specialist support they require. For example, staff members work hard to encourage all children and young people to take up appointments which they may be reluctant to attend. Children and young people with complex emotional or mental health needs are encouraged to attend appointments with specialist health care professionals, for instance learning disability and child and adolescent mental health services. This means that the health of children and young people improves while they are at the home.

The home has a structured and well organised programme in place for teaching children and young people daily living skills. Staff encourage and support all children and young people to participate in this process and to become more independent. However, not all young people who are eligible have a clear, structured pathway plan in place, written by their social worker which outlines what their future care needs are and how they will be met. This means that young people who are nearing adulthood will not know what services, help and advice they can expect to receive to aid their successful transition into independence.

Quality of care **good**

Staff provide positive role models for all the children and young people in their care. They work hard to establish warm, helpful relationships with them which in turn, helps to promote improved behaviour. The proactive approach to behaviour management adopted by staff is key to enabling children and young people to learn more appropriate ways to behave.

Staff work hard to engage children and young people in decision making about their own care and lives. They are encouraged to read and sign their records and care plans. However, care plans are written in the same manner for all children regardless of their academic ability or level of understanding. This means that not all children or young people are fully aware of what their placement at the home is meant to

achieve. The home provides good support for children and young people to express their views in statutory reviews of their care. The staff team uses formal methods such as keyworker sessions and young people's meetings to seek their views about the running of the home and their care. They also record and act on opinions gained more informally during daily activities and meal times. In addition, children and young people are able to access independent advocacy services. This helps to ensure that their wishes and feelings are both listened to and heard.

The home works well with placing social workers and other agencies and keeps them informed about the progress that individual children and young people are making. This helps ensure that their changing needs are identified and met.

Where appropriate, staff work hard to engage with the families, friends and relatives of individual children and young people by facilitating and supervising contact. Additionally, they welcome parents, siblings and other relatives into the home to visit particular children and young people. This helps to improve the quality of their lives at the home and the care they receive.

Staff regularly talk to children and young people about their achievements and the challenges they might face. This helps them consider their own situation and develop personal strategies for dealing with anxiety or stressful situations. Children and young people also know how to express any dissatisfaction they have with the service, including how to make a complaint. This helps them to feel listened to.

Support for children and young people's health is good. Their health plans are comprehensive and clearly identify any services in place or that are required. All children and young people are registered with all primary health services and are encouraged to attend for check-ups and treatment where necessary. This means that children and young people receive the treatment that they need when they need it. Medication arrangements within the home are appropriate and staff members are trained in the safe administration of medication. All staff have first aid training. Children and young people have ready access to any specialist health services they need. The home provides them with a lot of support and advice regarding their emotional, physical and sexual health. Where they have more complex emotional or mental health needs, these are addressed effectively which helps improve their quality of life.

All children and young people are accessing formal education. For some, this is the first time they have attended education for a considerable period of time. Where children and young people have difficulties in school or with their education, staff work effectively to support them. The staff team have high aspirations for all the children and young people in their care. They actively promote the importance of education and encourage attendance and all achievements are celebrated. This means children and young people are able to enjoy their success and gain confidence in their abilities.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Children and young people who live at the home are safe and feel safe. The home's staffing, practice and procedures promote their safety and well-being. Staff members work hard to establish positive relationships with all children and young people which enables them to discuss any concerns or worries they may have.

The positive approach taken by the home to managing the behaviour of all children and young people further improves their safety. Sanctions or restraint are rarely used to help modify behaviour. Staff prefer to use distraction techniques, dialogue and their positive relationships with individual children and young people to help them to understand the consequences of their actions.

Children and young people are very rarely absent without authority or missing from the home. The home has appropriate policies and procedures in place for helping to deal with situations in a robust manner should this become an issue.

The staff team knows how to respond to allegations, suspicions or evidence of harm to a child or young person. They are provided with training in safeguarding matters which is updated regularly. The home's recruitment processes are safe and ensure that any new staff undergo the necessary checks before they are employed at the home.

The home's premises are well maintained and safe. The electrical equipment, gas appliances and fire equipment are professionally serviced regularly. Hazards that may affect young people have been assessed and action is taken to minimise any identified risks. Fire drills take place at appropriate intervals.

Leadership and management **good**

The Registered Manager has been registered since April 2014. She has the appropriate qualifications to be the Registered Manager of a children's home. At the last inspection in January 2014 the home was judged to be making good progress. At that inspection, one recommendation was raised. The recommendation has been fully addressed.

This home is well-managed. The quality assurance monitoring of its activities and standard of care, carried out by the manager and the independent visitor, is of a good quality. These arrangements address important matters relating to each child and young person's care plans as well as the progress they are making in their lives. The home is well resourced and undertakes regular reviews of its provision. An annual development plan is in place which consolidates these reviews. Management and staff know what the strengths and weaknesses of the home are and have plans in place for its continued improvement.

The staff team is experienced, well trained and well supported. It is a cohesive team that is focused on improving the lives of children and young people. Staff receive training in a wide range of subjects that help to enhance the care provided to children and young people and enrich their lives. Formal supervision and appraisal systems operate effectively. This high level of support, training and experience improves the quality of the care provided to children and young people living at the home.

Staffing levels at the home are suitable to meet the needs of the children and young people living there. There is a low turnover of staff within the home. This stability helps to ensure that staff are experienced and have good working relationships with all those in their care.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.