

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	23/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC033467
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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

Inspection date	23/08/2016
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 leadership and management of this home are good. The manager is experienced, enthusiastic and committed to her job. She is quick to act when necessary and is a good role model. She monitors the care practices within the home and takes action when changes are required. She is well supported by a strong and active responsible individual and an organisation that clearly puts children and young people at the heart of their services.
- The children and young people at this home generally stay for long-term placements and they do make good progress over time. Children and young people are able to make good relationships with the staff and are able to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment. Staff do provide clear expectations and boundaries and this also provides a secure environment for the children and young people. The experience of living in this home is good with consistency and continuity of care.
- The children and young people do well in their education. All the children and young people have good school attendance and this is strongly supported by the staff. Most of the children and young people are achieving at or beyond their expected levels because they have been supported to settle in schools that meet their needs.
- The children and young people are supported to maintain family contact wherever possible. Some of the children and young people come from difficult backgrounds and have complex and difficult family relationships but staff make the best efforts that they can to support ongoing family relationships for them.
- Staff encourage the children and young people to take an active part in planning their care and in making decisions about their lives and their futures. This is supported with key work sessions and some of the staff are able to offer more specialist support in some areas of life.
- The children and young people are offered a wide range of activities and interests and staff maintain this at a realistic level. Many of the activities are play orientated and this is not only very appropriate for the young children but also encourages a sensible approach to leisure time.
- The staff team is experienced and skilled. There have not been many changes in the staff team and this helps provide continuity for the children and young people who thrive with this consistency.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which— (b) are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)) In particular, this relates to having full information at the time of admission including the consent for emergency medical treatment.	25/09/2016

Full report

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 with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/08/2015	Full	Good
23/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/02/2015	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 who live at this home do make good progress over time and their experience of living at the home is mostly good. Most of the children and young people stay for medium- or longer-term placements. Since the last full inspection, three young people have left the home. Two of these young people left before their placements were planned to finish. One young person left when their behaviour became too challenging. Another young person left in an unplanned way when they refused to return from their family home after an agreed visit. Placing social workers then agreed to them staying at home. Both of these young people had made some good progress before leaving. The social worker of one of these young people had written to the registered manager to say that she felt very good progress had been made. The young person had made good relationships with staff and had been able to hold an appropriate conversation with them by the time that they left whereas they could not do this prior to being admitted. The social worker said that 'staff had been fantastic'. This increase in confidence and social skills was clearly documented in records. One other young person had moved on to a planned foster placement and this has been a successful move. This move took time to plan in order to ensure that the placement was the best match and staff contributed well to this process. There are good relationships between the staff and all the children and young people. On the first day of the inspection, one of the children had their birthday and the celebrations carried on throughout the day in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. The children and young people do take part in planning their lives. The staff help children and young people to complete their own placement plans and this includes their likes and dislikes and their aims and targets. The children and young people also contribute to their risk assessments and this helps them to understand risky behaviour and what they can do to manage this better. The staff have introduced 'thinking reports'. These are sessions that take place after any incident where children and young people are asked to think about what they have done and to think about the consequences and then to think about how they could have done something different. This is very good and will help children and young people to understand and control their behaviours and actions better. The children and young people also have a say in the day-to-day running of the home and take part in regular group meetings, which they record. It is clear that their requests are actioned where appropriate. Education is given a high priority at this home. School attendance for all of the	

children and young people is very good and staff support these placements well. It is evident from reviews and school reports that most of them make continued good progress in their learning and achieve the targets set for them.

The staff take good care of all the children's and young people's health needs and appointments are made and kept as appropriate. One young person is due an annual medical check but has so far refused to attend. They are over 16 years of age and so can make their own decisions but staff continue to encourage them to attend. Similarly with emotional health needs. Staff refer children and young people to specialist workers when this is required and this supports their good progress. One young person had just started seeing a worker to look at his thoughts and feelings about life and his situation.

During the inspection, a group of the children and young people were going to the beach for the day. It was clear to the inspector that staff were enthusiastic and caring. Sandwiches were being made, sun cream applied and the children and young people were being reminded of what to take with them. It very much had the feel of a family outing and the intention was clearly to have a fun day playing safely at the seaside. One young person goes horse riding regularly and helps out at a local stables, which helps them to build confidence and social skills. This young person also attends a local community based girls' group where girls' issues are discussed in a supportive environment. This is also very positive.

Staff support and encourage the children and young people to keep in regular contact with their families wherever possible. This happens even when there are difficult circumstances. One young person had had a particularly difficult experience at a recent contact session with his family and staff have arranged for future contact to be less pressured, with less family members present but with more frequent contact times.

Care planning is generally good although one young person does not currently want to contribute their thoughts so that their pathway plan is not fully complete.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The children and young people living at this home are kept safe. The staff understand risk management well. They have put in place good risk assessments and good control measures. They also react quickly to changing situations and adjust the risk management accordingly. Recently, one young person has caused some concerns around potential aggression and violence and risks were quickly assessed to have risen. The manager together with the staff have increased levels of supervision for this young person in order to ensure that these risks are managed and this has been successful. There was a suggestion that this young person had developed some	

extremist views and this was referred to safeguarding workers as appropriate. It is not felt that there is any danger here but a worker has been appointed to speak to this young person about their thoughts and feelings.

Young children living at the home receive much closer supervision than the older young people and this is entirely appropriate.

There have been a number of missing from home incidents. These have been the two young people who recently left the home in unplanned ways. Generally, these incidents have been well managed and children and young people are located and returned to the home quickly and safely. Staff do make good effort to search for and find children and young people and do ensure that an independent return interview is offered. One child left the home without permission just prior to the inspector arriving and staff followed them and quickly returned them to the home without further incident.

Staff are caring and nurturing but do offer children and young people clear expectations and boundaries. They have used a number of sanctions when children and young people do not meet the expectations or cross boundaries and these are not only appropriate but there is also evidence that they work. The children and young people generally have improved behaviour as they settle and live at the home. One child who was recently admitted, had some quite challenging behaviours and within the space of just a few weeks they have settled down and the challenging behaviours have decreased. This is directly because staff are able to be nurturing and clear and firm about expectations and occasionally reinforce this with sanctions. This clarity of expectation also helps children and young people to feel secure.

The staff rarely use physical intervention but on the few occasions when they are used they are carried out appropriately and for a minimum amount of time.

The staff do talk to children and young people about the risks and dangers in life and this is well documented in key work sessions and in 'thinking' sessions that happen after any incident has occurred.

The children and young people say that they feel safe and secure at the home. There have been no complaints and the inspector observed a relaxed and happy household.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has a good deal of experience and has been in post for a number of years. She has recently completed a level 5 leadership and management qualification and so is now appropriately qualified. There is no doubt that the registered manager is very child-centred. She is	

enthusiastic and motivated and sets a good role model.

The staff do ensure that the home meets the aims and objectives as set out in the statement of purpose.

The home mostly offers longer-term placements for children and young people and they make good progress during their stay.

The registered manager and senior staff offer good supervision to the staff. This is regular and comprehensive. There have been a couple of agency staff working at the home for short periods recently. These staff have received a full induction prior to starting work and one of them spoken to by the inspector said that they had been well supported and well looked after by staff. All staff have had good training in the core areas and are all up to date with necessary refresher training. The organisation has recently starting using an online training provider in order to increase the range of training courses available and staff are starting to use these.

The registered manager has taken time to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the staff team and now has plans to further develop the service. She has a number of ideas that she wishes to develop in the home. She intends to make the home more informal and homely and she has plans to encourage children and young people to take part in more community based activities, including taking up voluntary work opportunities. She also plans to increase the range of staff specialisms so that different staff become more knowledgeable about various topics. They will then be able to pass this new knowledge and expertise on to other workers and the children and young people.

The registered manager has a good record of contacting other professionals and agencies in order to ensure that children and young people receive the specialised support that they need. Recently, a young person started to show signs that their mental health was becoming more concerning. The registered manager referred them for specialised counselling and support and this was put in place within a few days. There are also very good relationships with various education providers, which is helpful. There is no doubt that the registered manager can challenge other professionals when the need arises and ensure that the needs of the children and young people are well catered for.

There were no requirements or recommendation from the last inspection and only one requirement has been made at this one which is to ensure that the correct paperwork is in place at the point of admission. Specifically to ensure that consent for emergency medical treatment is in place prior to admission.

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 that 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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