

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	22/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC034083
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Cumbria County Council
Registered person address	Organisational Development, The Courts, English Street, CARLISLE, CA3 8NA

Responsible individual	Susan Butcher
Registered manager	Caroline Reid
Inspector	Elaine Clare

Inspection date	22/09/2015
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

SC034083

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Leadership is strong and the staff team work cohesively to promote the aims of the service and meet the needs of young people. Greater rigour in monitoring ensures that young people receive consistent care through improved standards of care.
- Partnership working with a range of agencies is very effective in providing young people with the necessary support to meet all their assessed needs.
- Strong safeguarding partnership working is particularly effective. Robust responses mean young people seldom go missing and are therefore at less risk of child exploitation.
- An improvement in school attendance and an enjoyment of academic and social learning, helps young people to achieve their potential as a result of living at this home.
- Staff work hard to develop positive closer relationships with parents, carers and siblings which leads to young people enjoying constructive time with their families.

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

Recommendations

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

ensure any sanction used to address poor behaviour is restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community (Guide to the Children's Home Regulations including the Quality Standards, April 2015, page 46 para 9.38)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This Local Authority owned home is registered for six children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural and learning difficulties. The Statement of Purpose details the age range of children and young people from 8 to 17 years of age.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
30/09/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
20/08/2014	CH - Full	Inadequate
19/02/2014	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
All of the young people have been resident in the home for only a short period of time. Despite this, they are settled and have developed trusting relationships with the staff team and each other very quickly. As a result they acquire a positive self-view and in turn develop confidence in their skills. Young people present well and display a pride in their appearance. They make choices about their activities in accordance with their age and interests. All five of the young people attend school or college or have an apprenticeship and have aspirations to pursue further training or education. As a result, the large majority of young people are likely to achieve their potential which will assist them into future employment. Staff demonstrate a commitment to supporting young people's education. They ensure young people are ready and prepared for learning and assist with homework and projects. Where there are gaps or issues with educational provision, staff are proactive in seeking alternative provision. A teacher was very positive about the home and of the support staff offer to their particular young person they said, 'firm boundaries and consistent routines, coupled with a positive approach from a key worker, ensured that our student settled quickly into the placement. The work done with our student to support her education and well-being has resulted in her re-engagement with school. Consequently there has been an improvement in her learning outcomes and a significant improvement in her attendance at school.' She concluded by saying, 'Given her starting point, our student has made significant progress in all areas.' Staff demonstrate their capacity to develop positive and trusting relationships with young people. These relationships assist them in addressing their behavioural difficulties and learn new methods of managing distress. Young people recognise that staff care about them. There is evidence of good consultation with young people to seek their views about their care and the running of the home. Staff assist young people to understand why it is not always possible to act on their wishes. Most of the young people do not engage in hobbies or scheduled activities, as they prefer to spend time with friends. However, they do enjoy impromptu events arranged by staff such as trips out to the cinema or restaurant, picnics and camping breaks. These activities provide good opportunities for the young people to socialise with staff and the other residents. Generally contact is going well for young people enabling them to continue to see	

their families and people of significance to them. This assists young people to maintain emotional ties with important individuals helping to sustain their identity. Some young people have expressed concerns about their contact arrangements. In these cases the home works effectively with the placing social worker to help the young person understand the decisions made.

The majority of young people are following independence plans which vary depending on their age and stage of development. For example, young people travel to school or college independently, prepare meals and obtain part time jobs in the community. They take part in the homes independent programme where they can gain a Bronze, Silver or Gold award.

Overall young people benefit from good health and meet required appointments with their doctor, dentist and optician as necessary. However, some young people arrived with a smoking habit and continue to smoke. This is in spite of efforts by staff to dissuade them from this activity.

Individualised behaviour management plans are in place outlining personal incentives for each young person. These assist staff to provide consistent support to young people to achieve good outcomes. However on occasion sanctions imposed to address poor behaviour are not always restorative in nature and do not help young people recognise the impact of their behaviour.

The home is pleasant and safe and located away from high risk activities such as crime and drug use. Staff provide a homely environment.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Safeguarding policies and procedures are clear and robust. Staff are aware of the increased vulnerabilities of young people and of the need for heightened protection. As a result young people are kept safe by a team of staff who demonstrate good knowledge of safeguarding practices. Staff are trained in recognising actual or potential harm or abuse and work in accordance with the local safeguarding authority's child protection and safeguarding procedures. The Registered Manager consults with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) with appropriate concerns. She has developed good working relationships with the LADO. The Registered Manager regularly reviews the records of any safeguarding concerns and takes appropriate action where necessary. Overall, children and young people are well protected.	

Behaviour management systems ensure staff care for children and young people safely. Staff practice is calm and skilled in diffusing incidents. Individual behaviour management plans are developed and implemented in consultation with families and other relevant professionals. Plans outline the potential behaviour and the strategies staff should apply to manage the particular behaviour. This includes proactive strategies such as avoidance, distraction and diffusion, as well as any physical intervention that may be necessary. Staff are trained in the safe deployment of physical intervention. This ensures that risk of its use is minimised and that young people are safe during such incidents.

There have been eleven incidents of young people going missing since the last inspection. A procedure is followed for staff in every event of such an occurrence. These procedures work in line with local police procedures. Staff are aware of the procedures and of their responsibilities to keep young people safe. A partner organisation ensures that all the return to home interviews are conducted in a timely manner.

Staff have good knowledge of e-safety and child sexual exploitation. Staff use one to one opportunities to guide young people to learn safe use of social media.

Recruitment arrangements are robust. All the necessary checks have been undertaken. Only adults assessed as suitable to work with children are appointed.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The Registered Manager has managed this home prior to regulation being the responsibility of Ofsted in April 2007. She has extensive experience and is suitably qualified to carry out his role with a National Vocational Qualification at level 4 and is currently completing the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. Managers and staff embrace the recent changes in social care legislation. They are keen to explore and improve the potential for young people to grow up in a nurturing and safe environment. Improvements in the management structure, with a new Local Authority residential manager, have strengthened the monitoring systems in the home. Children and young people respond positively to the care and professional relationships staff build with them. Staff members are suitably trained with relevant experience to care for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.	

The Registered Manager constantly reviews the adequacy of staff numbers so adjustments can be made to ensure the changing needs of young people are continually met. Staff morale is good. Staff are fully supportive and praising of the management of the home. They receive regular, good quality, reflective supervision in addition to daily on-going support.

Monitoring of the service is good. Auditing systems in place address any areas that require improvement and inform future planning. An independent visitor provides an objective view with recommendations that the Registered Manager actions.

Young people receive consistent care because delegation is effective. The management team embrace feedback and address issues raised in the independent visitor's reports, exemplifying their motivation to drive improvement in this service.

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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