

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034083
Inspector	Elaine Clare
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	Lynette Marjorie Burns
Registered manager	Caroline Jane Reid
Date of last inspection	19/02/2014

Inspection date	30/09/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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At the full inspection in August 2014, this home was rated inadequate in all areas. There were nine requirements in relation to welfare, managing behaviour, management, training, staffing competence (particularly with regards to compatibility assessments), placement plans, Statement of Purpose, Regulation 33 visits and décor of the young people's bedrooms. Five good practice recommendations were also made. A detailed development plan is in operation and the service now has the managerial capacity and leadership necessary to provide a strong service.

Most young people are settled in the home and enjoy positive relationships with staff. They have easy and regular access to the community. Young people benefit from satisfactorily planned care, which is focused on their individual needs and helps them make good progress. However, this could be further improved and a requirement has been made about this.

Staff have a good understanding of the home's safeguarding and missing from care procedures. Consequently, they are able to take swift action to support young people and protect them from harm. Staff are aware of young people's vulnerabilities and work effectively in partnership with the local authority to help keep them safe. The home liaises with relevant professionals and families to provide

a collaborative response to protect young people. Young people say they feel safe living in this children's home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by the local authority and provides care and accommodation for up to six boys or girls. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2014	Full	adequate
19/12/2013	Full	inadequate
07/01/2013	Interim	good progress
18/06/2012	Full	adequate

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
12A (2001)	ensure that in the case of a child that is looked after by the local authority the registered person must cooperate with the child's placing authority in agreeing and signing the plan for the child's placement Regulation 12A(1).	30/11/2014

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Most of the young people are happy and settled at this home. Young people are making progress to develop a positive self-view, emotional resilience and a knowledge and understanding of their backgrounds. They achieve this because they make and sustain good relationships with the adults caring for them and are supported to have meaningful contact with their families. Placing social workers say that young people speak well of the staff.

Young people are able to develop skills both inside and outside the home. Their involvement in the community occurs routinely and means they develop social skills and benefit from the range of resources available in a large town. Recreational activities are pursued in the home and a new chill-out room is available for this purpose. Practical skills are practised so that young people are able to be as independent as possible. This applies to their personal health care as well as domestic routines such as cooking meals. Healthy eating regimes are quickly understood by young people and this improves their health.

Young people accept that formal education is an intrinsic part of their routine. Attendance at school or college is usually good. Some benefit from tailor made education programmes to suit their individual needs and abilities. They are also pursuing both academic and vocational qualifications to support their employment prospects. However, some young people do not feel adequately prepared both practically and emotionally for education. Consequently, they are feeling vulnerable and scared about the future and this is negatively impacting on their behaviours.

Young people have care plans, though these do not always reflect current events in their lives. Young people sign their care plans, but they do not fully contribute to these plans. As a result, care plans do not help them to develop an understanding of their lives and what they can expect from their placements.

Quality of care **adequate**

Most young people engage well with the service because they recognise that staff are genuinely concerned and place their well-being at the forefront of their practice. For other young people this remains a 'work in progress' as some behaviours prevent young people co-operating with staff which leads to unsettled periods in the home particularly at night. Staff have high expectations for young people and want them to achieve. The enthusiasm and commitment of staff is clear to young people, who want to achieve themselves and have aspirations for their future.

Staff are representative of the local community and of different genders and ages. Staff ensure that young people understand what is expected of them when living at the home. Complex issues, such as the behaviour management plans and the children's guide, are addressed well. As a result of this close support young people are central to how the home operates.

Young people are offered a diverse range of educational, leisure and recreational opportunities, which stimulate and challenge them. Through their enjoyment of and successes in these activities, young people gain confidence and self-esteem. However staff do not always manage to persuade young people to engage in activities and for those young people their confidence and self-esteem remains low.

Good, individualised support is reflected in each young person's records and in the care they receive. This applies from before they are admitted, when steps are undertaken to assess young people and to make admissions as successful as possible. Strategies are carefully implemented to ensure consistency and effectiveness of practice. Any obstacles to progress are addressed promptly and proactively with the agencies concerned. Young people's progress is clear.

Multi-agency working is a real strength of the service and there are good links with services that support young people's health and emotional well-being, such as the looked after children's nurse and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

The property is in a suburban location and has easy access to public transport and amenities. It is presented to a good standard overall and decorated in a calming way that reflects the needs of the young people. The rear garden is a valuable source of stimulation and activity.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Appropriate systems are in place to ensure that young people and staff are as safe as possible in most ways. Incidents of going missing from the home are reducing. For example, since August 2014 there have been seven reports to the police. There is a clear missing from home protocol. Absences and missing episodes are tracked and analysed by the Registered Manager, and clear protocols have been agreed between the home, police and responsible authority for individual young people who go missing.

Behaviour management is addressed adequately. Previously, the Registered Manager allowed sanctions that were poorly conceived and ineffectual. The approach is now much more constructive. Staff do have to hold young people from time to time. Such holds are, at times, invasive and young people are held on the floor. Other times they are non-invasive and usually serve simply to guide young people away from a situation. Behaviour management strategies are compiled for each individual and

adjusted as necessary. Some behaviour management strategies require staff to be suitably trained and training is regularly refreshed. This decreases the likelihood of miscalculation and accidents.

Appropriate arrangements are in place for the safe management and keeping of medicines to promote the safety and well-being of young people. Regular fire, utilities and services safety checks are carried out, to ensure young people and staff stay and work in a safe environment. Young people and staff now know how to safely evacuate the home in an emergency, both at night and during the day.

Vetting processes are completed to check that new employees are suitable to work with young people. Recruitment files of new employees were found to demonstrate a robust recruitment procedure.

Leadership and management

adequate

The home's Registered Manager, who has been in post since before the home was regulated by Ofsted, is experienced and qualified. The staffing arrangements in the home are satisfactory. Good progress has been made in addressing the nine requirements from the last inspection, which included ensuring young people are safe. These changes occurred in order to ensure that the high expectations of the local authority were maintained.

Staff support young people to attend their statutory reviews and contribute to them. Minutes of statutory review meetings are obtained by the home. However young people's placement plans are not promptly revised in accordance with the outcome decisions of their review. As a result there is inconsistency with the placement objectives.

Young people are cared for by a committed, caring and qualified team of staff. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure staff attend all of the mandatory training courses. Staff are about to embark on additional rigorous training which includes Autism, mental health and safeguarding level two. This will provide them with insight into current practice on these conditions and how they affect young people in their care. Staff have a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities; this means they are able to provide good care and support to young people. The improved managerial support that is now in place reduces the impact of this previous shortfall.

The Statement of Purpose is up to date and, has been reviewed, and an appropriate children's guide is used with new residents. Currently the local authority have agreed not to admit any new young people to the home until the staff team have reviewed the admission policy.

The home's managers ensure that there is positive Regulation 33 reporting in place.

The Registered Manager's Regulation 34 reports are clear and the voices of young people and their parents are clearly evidenced. The premises provide a physically safe environment for young people. There are regular and timely health and safety checks. The home conducts fire drills at varying times on a monthly basis, which exceeds requirements. There are appropriate systems in place to notify Ofsted of any significant issues with regards to the young people.

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.