

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	23/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC061810
Type of inspection	Interim
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	Colin Wall
Inspector	Elaine Clare

Inspection date	23/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. The home has an experienced core staff team that have a balance of skills that contribute to a strong sense of cohesiveness and ability to rely on each other. They work together and ensure a common approach to behaviour management and daily routines. The children benefit from this stability, responding positively to boundaries; transitions to and from school and at bedtime routines are largely without incident. Staff clearly have a detailed knowledge of the children and have high aspirations, particularly in regard to their emotional and physical wellbeing. One spoke of the need to be highly attuned to each child to meet individual needs, another of understanding how to respond appropriately so as to de-escalate difficult situations. Staff make concerted efforts to help young people with their attendance at school and college. Social workers and leaders of schools are positive about the commitment that staff show to engage young people with education. They maintain regular contact and attend meetings to look at alternative ways to motivate and engage young people. Young people say staff talk to them about their challenges and barriers to learning. They are pleased they remain on target to complete their GCSE qualifications but their attendance is still a little below national attainment as staff are only able to motivate young people to attend part of their week's education or attend later in the day. Two young people have left the home since the last inspection and a new young person has been admitted. Those young people who have left had planned transitions out of the home. The manager and staff support young people to move on positively from the home even when under difficult circumstances. Young people make positive relationships and receive high levels of commitment from staff.	

The process of admitting young people is improved and the registered manager is keen to carry out detailed compatibility assessments for future admissions to the home. The manager acknowledges and does not want to repeat some of the dynamics that have emerged last year. He has worked hard to positively move young people on and refused new admissions in order to bring stability and clear boundaries back into the home.

Safeguarding procedures and responses to concerns continue to be robust. Staff know how to keep the young people safe due to in-depth individual risk management plans; and staff's knowledge about the histories of young people. The registered manager is tenacious at ensuring information is shared and that protocols rigorously respond to risks such as missing from care and child sexual exploitation.

Effective partnership working with the police ensures links between going missing and child sexual exploitation are closely scrutinised. Missing from home protocols are robust and result in an immediate response from the police. Staff and police look for young people, they visit friends' houses and check out links to drug use, supply and possible links to child sexual exploitation. Going missing episodes decrease and young people are safer as a result of the improved partnership working and safeguarding procedures.

Young people make good progress from their starting points. They have a greater understanding about their own safety. They acknowledge that living away from home helps keep them safe from child sexual exploitation and persistent drug and alcohol use. They say they are healthier. For example, they have a better diet and enjoy more positive physical activities with staff and particularly enjoy going shopping.

The new registered manager is a strong advocate for the young people. He is involved within the daily running of this home and maintains very positive relationships with young people.

Managerial oversight of incidents is much more robust. Serious incidents are routinely notified to Ofsted and are closely monitored via the registered manager and the independent visitor. Paperwork is very accountable and shows effective cross-referencing and notification to parents, placing authority social workers, safeguarding agencies and Ofsted. There is good regard for safeguarding procedures and this positively impacts on the safety of young people.

The registered manager is measured and strategic in his approach; with a comprehensive development plan in place. With the exception of full-time education attendance; the home is fulfilling the aims and objectives outlined within its statement of purpose.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate six young people of mixed gender, aged between 10 and 17 years old who have an emotional and/or behavioural difficulty. The home is managed by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/10/2015	CH - Full	Good
09/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
24/06/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
03/02/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
8: The education standard: In order to meet the education standard ensure that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (1) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure- (a) That staff – (i) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to	30/04/2016

overcome any such barriers; (ii) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; (iii) raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;	
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What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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