

SC391993

Registered provider: St Cuthbert's Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There were three children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2020.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 November 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2024	Full	Good
06/09/2022	Full	Outstanding
22/07/2021	Full	Good
01/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are helped to feel settled in this clean and welcoming home. All children have their own room and they have been actively encouraged to decorate their room with a theme of their choice. The communal areas of the home contain photos of the children, which creates a family atmosphere.

Children develop meaningful and lasting relationships with staff. Children were observed in the home with staff members who demonstrated positive and caring interactions, often using humour. The staff are compassionate and determined to support the children to succeed. Children who have moved on from the home maintain contact with staff. This demonstrates the positive impact staff have on children and the important role they play in their lives.

One child is approaching adulthood, and staff are supporting them to prepare them for moving on. Staff use creative ways to encourage the child to engage in learning new skills. When difficulties arise with a child, staff remain consistent and recognise the importance of independence. This helps to prepare children for when they move on from the home.

Children are supported to attend education and are making progress. One child is not currently attending any further education or training. When children face barriers to attendance, staff provide consistent encouragement and seek out alternative learning opportunities. Staff maintain regular communication with education providers and attend meetings. This helps to ensure children's educational needs are being met.

Staff support children to attend activities and engage in hobbies of their choosing. Some children have also been on a short holiday with staff. This helps children to develop social skills, try new activities and have fun. One child chooses not to engage in activities, preferring to spend time with peers. This is not uncommon for older children, and staff continue to be inclusive.

Children are supported to spend time with their family. Staff maintain positive relationships with family members, which demonstrates to children that their families are important. If staff have any concerns about family time, open discussions take place with the relevant agencies to ensure that safe arrangements are made for children to see their loved ones.

Professionals provide positive feedback regarding the approach of staff. They comment that managers and staff have excellent communication and keep them well informed concerning the needs of the children. One professional commented, 'The home is one of the best I have worked with, going above and beyond for children.' Another professional has confidence in staff, stating, 'The children are in safe hands.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children's files contain all the relevant documentation to help staff to manage risk. The risk assessments are detailed and specific to the individual needs of the child. They provide a clear overview to staff of what the risks are and how these may present themselves. There is a clear plan to ensure that staff know what to do to mitigate any risks to the child. This helps to ensure that the child is kept as safe as possible and protected from harm.

Staff speak warmly and positively about the children. Staff know the children's risks and needs well and how to respond to incidents when they may arise. De-escalation techniques are used successfully by staff when necessary. This means that children are not held by staff, and there have been no occasions that the police have been called to manage children's behaviour.

A child who has moved on from the home was vulnerable to going missing. There was a significant increase in the number of occasions the child went missing, and when this happened there was an appropriate response by staff. This included attending meetings with agencies to consider the increasing risks for the child and agree a strategy for moving forward. When staff were challenged by other professionals, the manager maintained their position and followed the agreed safeguarding procedures to manage the risks and meet the needs of the child.

When room searches are carried out, these are proportionate and appropriately recorded. Children are informed of a room search and any findings are discussed. This helps staff to keep children safe and supports them to better understand the child's risks. One example included an isolated incident when a child set a small fire in the home. Staff discussed this with the child, and their risk assessment was reviewed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is skilled, experienced and enthusiastic, speaking with warmth about each child. The manager knows the children exceptionally well and understands how their life experiences affect their needs and risks. This is reflected in the staff who were observed interacting with the children. They demonstrate care and compassion towards each child.

The manager has high aspirations for children and advocates strongly on their behalf. She ensures that decisions are made in the best interests of each child and uses effective communication skills to challenge agencies where necessary. This in turn, helps to promote children's progress and helps them to feel cared for and supported by staff.

There are effective working relationships between the manager and partnership agencies. All professionals spoke highly of the manager and the care that staff provide

for children. Professionals have confidence in the staff keeping children safe. This has led to professionals seeking placements for other children to live at the home.

One child's placement at the home was brought to an end. The manager recognised that they were unable to manage the emerging needs of this child and took decisive action to ensure their safety and well-being. Decisions were made in partnership with relevant agencies, and staff continued to support the child during difficult circumstances. This demonstrates that the manager is prepared to take decisions that consider the competing needs of all children.

The manager strives to improve practice. They ensure careful monitoring and scrutiny of the quality of care provided for the children. The manager gathers information and analyses this to enable progress to be tracked and patterns of behaviour to be identified. This assists the manager and staff in responding to the emerging risks and needs of children they care for.

The manager leads by example, creating a culture of respect and high expectations. The staff are committed to working together, and they support each other to provide good care to children. The manager supports staff through regular supervision. This helps staff to share any concerns and develop in their practice. There is a focus on the children and on staff welfare. When difficulties arise in the home, additional supervision takes place to support staff members. Supervision is reflective in nature and has a focus on the development of staff and their needs.

Team meetings take place frequently and are well attended by the staff team. There is a strong focus on the children and their needs. This enables staff members to contribute to open discussions around meeting the needs of the children and providing care. There is a focus on learning from practice, and consideration is given to what has worked well and areas of improvement. Staff continue to develop their practice and provide a high standard of care to children.

All staff have completed their mandatory training. The manager actively seeks out additional training opportunities for staff that will support in meeting the needs of children to a high standard. One example includes training for all staff to support a child with their health condition. This helps to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to provide the best possible care to the children, some of which can be crucial, particularly regarding health issues.

Children are actively encouraged to share their wishes and feelings regarding their care in the home. This is through children's meetings, which children attend fortnightly. These offer the opportunity for children to discuss a variety of topics in the home. The manager has acknowledged that meetings can be difficult due to the individual needs of the children. Managers and staff continue to consider ways to improve children's engagement in a way that better meets their individual needs.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC391993

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: St Cuthbert's Care

Registered provider address: St. Cuthberts House, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
NE15 7PY

Responsible individual: Amanda Head

Registered manager: Amy Ward

Inspector

Kerry Chater, Social Care Inspector

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