

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 charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2020.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 22 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/07/2021	Full	Good
01/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/07/2018	Full	Good
22/08/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children flourish because of the outstanding care and support they receive from a nurturing staff team. Staff are committed to improving the experiences of children in their care. They are good role models and adopt a parent-like approach to their daily interactions with children. Consequently, this enhances children's progress and helps to ensure that they feel loved and well cared for.

The children have a strong sense of belonging to the home and like living there. One child describes it as 'mint'. Professionals comment that it is 'the best placement' and 'the only place I felt confident about for [name of child]'.

Children have excellent relationships with staff. They trust them and tell them their biggest worries. One professional said, 'They are the ones that [name of child] goes to when things are tough.' Staff work incredibly hard to really get to know and understand the children. One parent said, 'The staff see the children for who they are and not what is written on their records.'

Children make significant progress emotionally. They are helped by staff to learn ways to self-regulate, which improves their mental health and provides them with life-long skills. It also reduces serious incidents in the home, which benefits all the children.

All children attend an education placement. This is a major accomplishment and an area of significant progress for the children. Staff understand the value of education and the influence it has on all areas of a child's life. Staff instil this value in the children, which helps them to succeed.

The children are celebrated and praised for their achievements. They are rewarded in a variety of ways, which gives the children a strong sense of personal development and accomplishment. The children are clearly invested in the home and have confidence that the staff team will help them to overcome challenges they may face in their lives.

Consequences are used to help children learn that unwanted behaviours can have implications for them. Restorative approaches are used where possible, which gives children the opportunity to make amends and gain back what they have lost. However, children's views are not consistently recorded. This means that the child's voice is not always captured in a way that is helpful to them.

Children have a purposeful say in their own day-to-day care. They are aware of and involved in important decisions about their lives. This helps children to feel valued and respected. One member of staff said, 'I am proud of the involvement our

children have in decision-making which affects their experiences of living in the home.'

Several professionals commented on staff being 'sensitive' to the children's feelings. They know the right approach to take for each child. As a result, the children attend important health appointments, including those which they have previously refused. This means that children's health needs are better met.

Activities are plentiful and chosen by the children. As a result, all children participate, despite how difficult this is for some, and they have fun and make special memories. Family members and friends are often involved, which provides a sense of normality for the children. Staff have created memory books for each child which capture these experiences.

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

Children's experiences of living in this home have had a significant impact on many aspects of their lives. This is demonstrated by the positive feedback received from professionals and the children themselves. The inspectors found that the safety of the children is the absolute priority of the staff team. One professional said, 'They (staff) always put [name of child]'s safety first.' Another said, 'They are really proactive around keeping [name of child] safe.' Staff respond immediately and robustly to safeguarding concerns. This approach helps to better protect children from harm.

Risk assessments are clear, thorough, regularly reviewed and updated. Comprehensive plans are in place to manage the children's risks. Staff familiarise themselves with these plans and there is regular communication from the manager, which helps to ensure that children experience a consistent approach. As a result, staff have an excellent understanding of the children's risks and how to reduce them.

When managing the children's risks, staff take great care in being respectful of the children's wishes and feelings. This helps children to feel in control and more willing to follow the safety plans they help to create. As a result, missing-from-home episodes have reduced, and children keep in regular contact with staff when they are in the community. This means that children are better protected from harm.

Staff are highly skilled in de-escalating situations. They are attuned to the children's individual personalities and are careful to respond and challenge in ways which are productive rather than destructive. As a result, there has been no need to use physical restraint in over a year. This represents a significant area of progress and demonstrates that the children are settled and happy.

Staff routinely check children's electronic devices and help children to learn how to be alert to online dangers. Where necessary, restrictions are put in place to help

safeguard children. However, this is carefully assessed by the manager to ensure that the measures taken are in line with the children's plans.

Staff have completed all mandatory training. They also obtain additional skills through a programme of ongoing learning and reflection. This enables them to better understand and respond to the children's specific needs and risk issues. This means that children are better safeguarded and cared for.

Measures are in place and followed to ensure that new staff are recruited safely. This helps to prevent unsuitable people from being recruited to work with the children in this home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly regarded by the children. She has high aspirations for the children and leads by example. She is fully aware of the strengths of the home and the areas for development. She was responsive to some minor shortfalls identified during the inspection and immediately rectified them. Staff practice reflects the standards set by the registered manager and there is a shared ethos of providing children with bespoke care and support to meet their individual needs.

The registered manager advocates and challenges on behalf of the children. She has ensured that children are in the education placement which is right for them. She has worked tirelessly so that children who are at risk of exploitation receive the help and support they need from the relevant professionals and services. This has directly safeguarded those children.

The registered manager is very well respected by professionals, who value the 'great care' she and her team provide to the children. Her opinions are respected and decisions are trusted. This has resulted in children's plans being amended to reflect their ever-changing needs and what is in their best interests.

The registered manager is supported by a stable, highly committed and competent team of staff who bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills. Staff describe working at this home as 'a pleasure'. The registered manager is said by several staff to be the best manager they have ever had. She is described as 'incredibly supportive', 'caring', 'compassionate' and 'approachable' by the children and the staff. She provides staff with the time to develop their skills and confidence so that they can provide the best possible care to the children.

The children and the importance of individualised care are central to staff supervision, which takes place every month. Staff are praised for their good practice and any shortfalls are discussed and reflected on. One staff member said, 'Supervision helps me to reflect on my practice, areas I can improve, with supportive advice on how I can achieve this. I find this very helpful.'

Team meetings also take place monthly and are another forum where the children are discussed and decisions are made. However, these discussions are not always

reflected in the minutes. This makes it difficult for staff who are unable to attend to see what was discussed, which could have a detrimental impact on consistent approaches to the children.

The registered manager has excellent monitoring systems in place. The tools enable her to have an overview of all areas in the home and to identify any shortfalls. They also enable her to see any progress and trends and to act if there are concerns.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should seek the views of children when a consequence is made in the context of building positive relationships. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.33)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping. In particular, team meeting minutes should reflect all the discussions, decisions and actions regarding the children. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 Cuthbert's House, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 7PY

Responsible individual: Amanda Head

Registered manager: Amy Ward

Inspectors

Emma Ridley, Social Care Inspector
Ruth Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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