

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	12/05/2015
Unique reference number	SC391993
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	St Cuthberts Care
Registered person address	St. Cuthberts House, West Road, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE15 7PY

Responsible individual	Mrs Sheila Errington
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Mr Colin Imrie

Inspection date	12/05/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Adequate
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	Requires improvement

SC391993

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people make progress in all areas of their development.
- The staff team is experienced and know the children and young people well.
- The staff are caring, committed and enthusiastic about supporting the children and young people.
- Children and young people are very much part of the local community. They attend local schools and take part in a range of community based activities.
- Children and young people are supported well to maintain appropriate contact with their families.
- Children and young people are kept safe because staff understand the risks they face and work effectively to minimise these. Staff are caring and offer good supervision and appropriate boundaries to children and young people.

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

- The management of the home is in transition. The interim manager and the responsible person have managed the home well on an interim basis and a new manager is about to be appointed. The management team now needs to be stabilised and settled and the appointed manager must register with Ofsted.
- The manager needs to be more proactive in engaging with other professionals in the wider system to ensure that children and young people's needs are well met.
- The provider must review and improve the personalised work that staff undertake with children and young people and record this effectively.

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
5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met: In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard with particular reference to ensuring that each child has a personal education plan and that each child has a return interview if they go missing the registered person must ensure that staff: (b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs.	12/06/2015
8. The Education standard: In order to meet the education standard with particular reference to planning and delivering a package of home tuition as well as making clear plans for a return to an education placement for young people not currently attending school the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible.	12/06/2015
12. The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard with particular reference to completing the independent return interview the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(ii) help each child understand how to keep safe.	12/06/2015

13. The leadership and management standard: In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to reviewing the placement planning system and improving the quality of key working the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.	12/06/2015
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Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered for up to six children of either sex from eight years to seventeen years at any one time. The home may provide care and accommodation for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD) and children with learning disabilities (LD). The home is owned by a charitable organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2015	Full	Adequate
23/12/2014	Full	Inadequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
The manager and staff at the home are very committed to the care of the children and young people and build good relationships with them. This means that children and young people are able to settle well and work through issues with staff because they are skilled and motivated. Children and young people all have personalised plans which are comprehensive and up to date. Most young people attend school and are making good progress with their education. Some of these young people are reported to be making particularly good progress at school. Some young people are not accessing education as well as they should despite staff efforts to encourage and support this. One young person does not have a personal education plan in place and their education placement has not yet been identified. This means that they only have home tuition at present. Staff have tried to obtain a plan from the local authority but have been unsuccessful. A requirement has been made at this inspection to ensure that each child has access to education. Children and young people have good access to health services. All children and young people have regular medical check-ups and are supported to take any required medication. Staff support children and young people to deal well with more complex health needs. A number of the children and young people access various support services. Some young people access support from the Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service and from Barnardo's workers. All children and young people living in the home have good plans in place for them to maintain appropriate contact with their families. One social worker commented that staff go out of their way to ensure good quality contact takes place even when circumstances are very difficult and family members live a long way away. Staff encourage children and young people to participate fully in the running of the home. There are regular household chores assigned to everyone appropriately and they are often keen to help with additional jobs. One young person was helping cut the grass in the garden, another was making sandwiches for lunch and another was baking cakes and scones for everyone. This aspect of the home is particularly good, with everyone working together to ensure the home runs smoothly. Some young people cook their own meals and independence learning is given a high priority. One young person has a pathway plan in place that is designed to guide them to independence and this is working well.	

Staff, children and young people communicate with each other easily and feel they are listened to well. Staff were keen to provide help when it was asked for and generally children and young people were polite and realistic in their requests.

The atmosphere within the home has a warmth to it with all persons sharing mealtimes. The kitchen is the hub of the house and both children, young people and staff congregate here to socialise.

All the children and young people participate in a range of activities. One young person is active within the Air Cadets, another is very active in film-making and animation and has recently won an award for this. Others participate in a range of sports. The staff arrange a variety of group activities and trips including holidays by the coast which prove to be popular.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Staff have a very good understanding of the risks that face the children and young people and these are well recorded and have good action plans in place to minimise these risks. Staff have managed incidents of drug taking and alcohol misuse in the past. Staff have recognised this issue and worked hard to support young people to stop these activities. Some young people have been missing from the home for short periods of times and overnight on a couple of occasions. Staff have worked hard to reduce these incidents significantly. They have done this by following young people who are leaving the home without permission or will actively go out and look for them if needed. Staff are always proactive in trying to return young people to the home as soon as possible. Currently episodes of young people missing from the home are significantly reduced. Staff have also worked hard, together with specialised outside workers to support young people at risk of sexual exploitation and this work is having a positive impact in that concerns are reducing. Staff work well with children and young people with challenging behaviour. No restraints have been carried out and only a few sanctions have been given. These have been appropriate and proportional. Staff have a system of positive incentives and rewards which is used frequently and which works well. Staff also use praise frequently and have embraced the principles of restorative practice well in their everyday dealing with challenging behaviour. There has been some bullying incidents and staff have tackled these issues well, working with the young people doing the bullying and the young people being bullied. This intervention by staff	

has worked well and there has been no bullying recently.

Children and young people are given clear boundaries and expectations for their behaviour and staff are able to work consistently and supportively to help children and young people make positive changes.

One young person with a history of disrupted placements and very challenging behaviour has been able to make excellent progress in improving their behaviour during their time at this home. The social worker of this young person says he feels 'very positive' about this placement as they have been able to offer long term consistent support where others have not and feels that this young person has committed to the home because staff have made them feel wanted and 'made them feel like part of the home'.

Children and young people were observed to have strong relationships with staff. They are able to approach and talk to staff easily. They are able to share a joke or discuss more important topics.

This commitment and consistent efforts to address risky behaviour mean that children and young people in this home are increasingly safe.

The manager has recently updated the safeguarding policy and procedures and has ensured all staff are trained and familiar with this. Staff have had recent training in child sexual abuse, restorative justice and behaviour management as well as other topics.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The previous Registered Manager left her post at the end of March 2015 and the deputy manager has been appointed as the interim manager. The interim manager has been actively supported by the Responsible Individual, and other managers within the organisation. These arrangements have worked well and have been adequate. The manager has been able to improve safeguarding by reducing the number of missing episodes and also by enhancing the homes safeguarding policy and procedures. The interim manager has ensured that all the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. Internal monitoring is now satisfactory and a development plan has been put in place.	

Under the interim management arrangements most of the children and young people have continued to make progress in all areas of their development. This is directly related to the commitment the manager and staff show to the children and young people. All children and young people have a comprehensive placement plan which is monitored well, but does not evidence the work taking place very well and is not in sufficient depth.

The manager and staff continue to operate a service that fits what the home's Statement of Purpose describes. This document has been reviewed and is up to date as is the Children's Guide.

The manager has ensured that staff are supported well with good quality supervision and training. One new member of staff has started in the period since the last inspection and was recruited safely and thoroughly. This member of staff is currently completing their induction period. The manager has organised recent training around issues that are current and relevant. Staff report that training in child sexual exploitation and restorative practice has been useful and has helped them improve their practice. Recent bullying incidents were resolved by employing a more restorative way of working and there are several examples where children and young people have been involved in restoration when minor damage to the house has occurred.

The interim manager has good relationships with a variety of other relevant professional and has ensured close co-operation with the local police service when young people have been missing.

The interim manager has a great deal of experience in residential child care and does have a level five leadership diploma.

The interim manager has not been long in post and will step back down to deputy manager shortly but there are some areas where the interim manager and the management support team need to improve. The interim manager has not made sufficient efforts to obtain a personal education plan for one young person and has not made sufficient arrangements for this young person's continuing education. The interim manager also has not made sufficient arrangements to ensure that young people have return interviews each time they go missing. The interim manager needs to engage better with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met in these ways.

The interim manager and the responsible individual are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They have built and maintained a strong consistent team who are clearly nurturing and committed. They have ensured that this staff team continue to be well supervised, well trained and well supported. Staff comment on all these matters positively. One staff member said, of the interim manager, she is 'always there for you, she knows when you need support'.

The home is kept in good order throughout and there are no obvious health and

safety issues although there are one or two minor maintenance issues that require attention. Steps have been taken to address these maintenance issues.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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