

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC391993
Inspector	Steve Pearson
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 Tyne & Wear NE15 7PY
Responsible individual	Sheila Terese Errington
Registered manager	Dianne Francis Hewison
Date of last inspection	23/12/2014

Inspection date	18/02/2015
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Previous inspection	inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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The overall effectiveness of the home has improved since the previous inspection.

Most of the shortfalls identified at that inspection have been addressed. As a result, arrangements to keep children safe are better. The quality of leadership and management has also improved.

There are still weaknesses in the promotion of safety. The child protection policy remains insufficiently complete, clear or accurate. The quality of internal monitoring is still weak and is reducing the capacity for continuous improvement.

Outcomes for young people are positive. All young people spoken with said their behaviour had improved since they had come to live in the home. They said they were calmer and felt more mature. Over time, educational outcomes are good. The Registered Manager, staff and placing authorities confirmed that young people had developed positively.

The quality of care is also good. The staff provide consistent, high quality care through effective and warm working relationships with young people. All the staff are appropriately qualified and they benefit from training that is designed to address the needs of young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people. The home is provided by a charity and is registered to care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/12/2014	Full	inadequate
22/01/2014	Interim	good progress
16/05/2013	Full	good
03/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress

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
16 (2001)	ensure the child protection policy of the children's home covers the issues described by legislation (Regulation 16 (2)(b), (2)(f)(v) and (2)(g))	01/04/2015
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every three months and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34(1))	01/04/2015
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home and their parents. In particular, record the views of children and parents in the monitoring reports. (Regulation	01/04/2015

	34(3))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- identify in the written annual development plan for the future of the home any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirm the continuation of the home's current operation and resource (NMS 15.2)
- send a copy of every quarterly regulation 34 monitoring report to HMCI within 28 days of completion. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 3.14)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress from their point of admission to the home.

Most young people are doing well in education. Those who have lived at the home for a long time have high levels of attendance and are achieving their academic potential. For more recent admissions, educational arrangements are less well-established.

Young people make improvements in their emotional and physical health. The home has effective working arrangements with external agencies and health professionals. The staff ensure that all young people have regular health check-ups and regular appointments with a dentist and optician.

Over time, young people's behaviour also improves. One young person said, 'My behaviour is a lot better since I came here. I used to kick off all the time but now I'm a lot calmer.' Another young person said, 'I've settled down since I came here. I'm more mature.'

Where young people have been going missing prior to admission, or where they have been putting themselves at risk, these behaviours have also reduced after coming to live at the home. One young person said, 'I used to go missing a lot before I came here but it's a lot less often now.'

Young people also make good progress in gaining skills that will be useful when they are older and living independently. Young people also develop social skills through being involved in a range of community activities where they develop friendships with other young people from outside of the children's home.

Quality of care **good**

The Registered Manager and staff provide a high quality of care.

All young people spoken with at the inspection were positive about the care they receive. One young person summed this up saying, 'I love living here. It's proper decent. I like the staff and I like the activities we go on.'

Young people have a significant say in how the home is run. They have regular house meetings and their views are recorded. Minutes of the meetings show what people have said and how actions have been followed up. This helps young people to feel valued and involved. It raises their esteem and confidence.

Young people's behaviour is generally good. Sometimes there is anti-social behaviour which other young people find annoying. One young person said, 'Sometimes there is noisy behaviour at bedtime but the staff sort it out.' The staff receive training in child development and attachment theory. This has had a significant effect in helping to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour.

The staff enable young people to take part in a wide range of activities. Young people gain a lot of pleasure from the activities and they find them stimulating.

The Registered Manager and staff work effectively with schools and education professionals. This leads to positive educational outcomes. Where there are problems with attendance or behaviour at school, the staff liaise with the relevant professionals in a timely manner to bring about an effective resolution.

The house is clean, well-maintained and homely. Young people can personalise their bedrooms and so can develop and demonstrate their own identity. One young person said, 'I like my bedroom. It's comfortable and I have everything I need.' The Registered Manager has conducted an annual assessment of the locality in which the home is situated. This helps them to identify if there are any concerns in the local area which may have a potential impact on the welfare of young people.

The needs of young people and how these will be met are recorded in their care plans. These are kept up-to-date by each young person's key worker.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people are safe and feel safe.

At the previous inspection there was concern about the lack of clarity in the written procedure for how to respond to allegations, suspicions or evidence of abuse. The registered persons have re-written the procedure but it still falls short of legal requirements. Parts of the new version are incorrect or lacking in detail. This means staff are not being adequately supported to know what to do if a child protection concern arises.

The recording of child protection concerns has improved since the previous inspection. A central file of concerns is now maintained in the home, as well as a record in each young person's file. Therefore if any young person's file is sent back to a placing authority, a record of concerns is still available on the premises.

Young people spoken with said, 'I feel safe. There isn't any bullying.' One of them said, 'We do bicker sometimes but that's normal in a group of teenagers.' Staffing levels are good and this helps to ensure someone is available to intervene if bullying arises. The Registered Manager and staff are focused on ensuring bullying is addressed robustly. They receive training in countering bullying and are striving for

accreditation in this work.

All the staff have received training in child sexual exploitation and they deal with any suspected or actual concerns effectively. Young people do not go missing often. Where this does happen, robust procedures are carried out effectively.

The premises are safe. Professional technicians regularly service the electrical equipment, gas appliances and equipment for preventing, detecting and extinguishing fires. Appropriate recruitment arrangements are in place which help to ensure that staff employed to work with children are suitable.

Leadership and management

adequate

At the previous inspection Ofsted judged that the overall effectiveness of the home was inadequate and made four requirements and five recommendations. The registered persons have addressed most of the shortfalls. As a result the safety of care and leadership and management have improved. In particular, the arrangements to address the risks of young people going missing and being at risk of child sexual exploitation are better. Safety has also improved because recruitment procedures now fully meet the demands of legislation. More resources have been devoted to addressing the risks of bullying.

Since the previous inspection, leadership and management arrangements have also improved. Records of young people are more accessible and are better-organised. Training has been provided in important subjects such as child sexual exploitation. Improvement plans for the home are more detailed. Although the leadership and management arrangements are no longer inadequate, some significant shortfalls remain.

Internal monitoring is poor. This means the capacity for continuous improvement is weak. At the previous inspection, Ofsted made a requirement about the quality of internal monitoring. The shortfall has not been addressed effectively. The monitoring still does not address all the issues required by legislation. Consequently the requirement made at the previous inspection must be repeated. There is also a lack of clarity in the reports of internal monitoring about what young people and their parents say about the quality of care. Their views are important in helping to identify and address shortfalls. Ofsted has not received any of the internal monitoring reports in seven months. Legislation requires that these are sent to the regulator every three months. As a result of the weaknesses, Ofsted is unable to monitor the quality of care effectively between inspections.

Monitoring by an external independent person is good. In accordance with legislation, the person visits once a month to assess and report on the quality of care provided. The visitor meets young people and staff and talks to parents. They make recommendations where necessary and check on how these recommendations have

been met at their next visit.

Staffing levels are good. A young person said, 'There are always enough staff on duty.' Although some staff have left recently, turnover levels are low and the level of sickness absence is low. The Registered Manager and staff are keen to ensure high levels of consistency. To cover the temporary shortages, they tend to work extra hours themselves instead of bringing in casual staff who the young people may not know well.

The Registered Manager has been in post since the home opened six years ago. They have the necessary experience and qualifications for their role.

The staff receive high levels of support. There is a training plan which makes clear what training courses the staff must attend and when. Training courses are repeated every one to three years to ensure the staff maintain appropriate levels of knowledge and skills. All the staff are qualified in caring for children. They also receive regular support through formal supervision with a senior person.

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.