

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 operated by a charitable organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to six children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The registered manager has worked hard to settle the home after a period of change. She has overseen the appointment of a full senior staff team and has also improved recording systems and monitoring. She is well organised and prioritises the needs of the children and young people who live at the home, so that they enjoy the experience of living at the home and also make good

progress. The registered manager is well supported by the responsible individual and the provider organisation.

- The children and young people are kept safe. Staff understand and make good risk assessments and put these into action effectively, in order to minimise risk. Some young people have been missing from the home at times, but the staff have worked hard to understand and minimise risks arising from this behaviour. The staff have worked hard with other agencies, including the police, to assess and minimise risk and to help the young people keep themselves safe.
- The children and young people have good relationships with the staff. The children and young people are well supported with relevant personalised work and staff refer them to external specialists when this is helpful. The children and young people have been well supported to improve their education attendance and they have also been well supported to maintain and improve family relationships.
- The children and young people have many opportunities to engage in leisure activities, trips out and short holidays. The staff share many of these times with the children and young people, which further enhances relationships. The children and young people also take an active part in making decisions about the home and contribute in many ways. The children and young people benefit in many ways from these shared times of working and enjoying activities together.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The staff are working hard to keep the children and young people safe. Currently, one young person is not engaging with staff and is missing from the home on a regular basis. While staff are currently working with other agencies, they need to continue to review this situation closely and to ensure that at all times they have a clear risk management strategy in place that has been agreed with the placing authority to keep this young person as safe as possible.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/07/2016	Full	Good
08/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/05/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Where a child runs away persistently, the registered person should, in consultation with the child's placing authority, convene a risk management meeting to develop a strategy for managing the risks to the young person. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.32)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has been through a period of change, including a number of staff changes and changes in the young people living in the home. This has caused the home to have been a little unsettled for a period of time.

The registered manager is a hands-on manager who spends plenty of time with the young people, knows them all well and has excellent relationships with them. This is not only good for the young people but also provides an excellent role model for other staff. She has created an environment where the young people can be relaxed and comfortable and where they can enjoy the experience of living in the home. The young people are treated with respect and care and in this nurturing culture they make good progress. As part of her first year in charge she has also overseen a substantial programme of redecoration in the home. The young people have helped with this process and the home is now more homely and enticing. Some of the young people have helped in the purchase of some pet rabbits and have helped set up and build the hutch and the run. This also adds to the homeliness of the building, and one of the young people in particular takes a keen interest in caring for the rabbits on a daily basis.

There are some very good relationships between the young people and the staff. The inspector observed a great deal of laughter, fun and positive interaction between the young people and staff. The staff were providing an environment where the young people flourish. Boundaries were clear, expectations around behaviour were in place and plenty of advice and guidance was being given. The young people clearly felt safe and secure in the home. The young people were receiving some very good individualised care from the staff and were being referred to specialist workers as necessary. Some of the key-work sessions were particular good. They were relevant and in-depth and at times explored difficult issues. These will help the young people to deal with and come to terms with some of their difficulties and will help them to settle further. Some innovative and good-quality discussions at the young people's meetings have also been recorded, which is very positive.

On the key-work records of one young person they were quoted as saying that they thought the manager was 'really caring'. The inspector spoke to other young people and

they confirmed that they also had a high regard for both the staff and the manager.

Since the previous full inspection, four young people have been admitted and three have left. One older young person arrived but did not settle and chose to leave for a more independent living arrangement after a short space of time. Two other young people who had been at the home for longer placements moved out to more independent living situations. These were planned moves and they were positive experiences.

The young people in residence at the home are making progress. At the last inspection, several of the young people were missing education and were not making progress. A requirement was made to address this issue and the staff have now supported the young people to improve both their school attendance and their educational achievements. Two of the young people have planned college placements to start in September and were, at the time of the inspection, anxiously awaiting the results of their GCSE exams.

All the young people are offered incentives, and all the young people have agreed targets and goals. This system was working well and the young people were making progress with learning independence and life skills.

There has also been good progress made in maintaining and developing contact and relationships with families. One young person in particular had much improved contact with their mother, which was really positive. When the inspector spoke to their mother, she said that the home and staff were 'brilliant' and that her child had made 'really good progress'.

One young person has significant and complex health needs and the staff have supported them to become more independent in this respect. The health needs of the other young people were also being met.

The young people had plenty of opportunities to practise independent living skills and were helping around the house with day-to-day chores. The young people who moved on were well prepared and supported. Some of the young people who have moved on come back to the home for the occasional meal and they are welcomed.

While most of the young people at the home are making good progress, one older young person seems to be disengaging from staff. Although they did have a good relationship with staff, they are now saying that they want to move on to a more independent living situation. They are spending increasing amounts of time away from the home without permission and are not engaging with staff to talk about what the future possibilities are. This situation is causing some concerns at the moment.

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

The children at this home have been kept safe. There have been very few safeguarding incidents and although there were a few bullying incidents some time ago, these have significantly reduced and there has been no bullying for some time now.

One young person had been assessed as being at risk of child sexual exploitation and

over time these risks have decreased. This young person has been supported to spend time with a specialist worker and they have also spent time with staff members addressing these concerns so that this work has brought about positive changes.

One young person has experienced some abuse and harassment from others outside of the home via various social media platforms. The staff have spent time with this young person to both educate and support them so that they now both understand what can be done about this situation and have the confidence to address these issues. This is a good example of preventative safeguarding work, which not only keeps the young person safer but also enhances the quality of their life by raising self-esteem and confidence.

There have been quite high levels of missing from home recorded over the period since the previous full inspection. This has mostly been caused by young people who have been ready for moving on to more independent living situations. Two of these young people did move on in planned ways and the issues were therefore addressed. One young person still living at the home now has increasing numbers of missing from home incidents. Concerns are rising because little is known about where this young person is spending their time. While there is no evidence to suggest that they are at high risk, there are many unknowns. The staff are trying very hard to address these issues and have been innovative and vigilant. The staff have always taken the correct course of action and are working very closely with other agencies, including the police. There are accurate risk assessments, which are changed if there are any different circumstances or if new information comes to light. Staff are working with the placing authority to try to make plans for moving this young person on to independent living, which is what they say they want. The risks around this young person are unclear but staff are monitoring the situation closely. Planning and risk management are evident. However, the inspector has made a recommendation that staff need to have an agreed and planned management strategy in place with the placing authority so that this situation is addressed sooner rather than later.

In general, staff have created a culture of respect and tolerance and the young people get along well. Challenging behaviour is dealt with effectively by staff, and the number of incidents of challenging behaviour have dropped significantly over the previous six months. This is a result of the work the staff have done. Staff give the young people clear boundaries and expectations, they have built better relationships and they have helped and supported the young people to deal with some of the difficulties and issues in their lives. One young person spoken to by the inspector said that they felt safe at the home and said that staff supported them well.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post for a little over a year. She was registered in December 2016 and she is appropriately qualified.

The registered manager has made a concerted effort to stabilise and settle the home and this is very evident. Morale in the staff team has risen and it is carrying out some good work. The young people living in the home are making better progress and the

experience of living in the home has improved.

There have been a number of staff leaving and arriving, together with some staff sickness. However, the manager has now completed the appointment of a senior staff team and is close to having a full team of staff. During this period of change, the registered manager has been well supported by the responsible individual and the provider organisation by agreeing to keep the numbers of admissions low. This has been positive management.

The home meets its aims and objectives as set out in the statement of purpose.

The registered manager sets an excellent example to her staff. She is well organised, efficient and effective in her management style and has a comprehensive development plan for the home. She is supportive of her staff team and currently supervises every member of staff. This has enabled her to get to know each staff member individually and to understand their strengths and weaknesses so that she can help with their development or delegate work to them appropriately. Now that she has a consistent deputy manager she intends to pass some of the supervision work over to them.

She has ensured that all the staff training is up to date and now plans to extend the training programme to cover more therapeutic ways of working so that the members of the staff team become knowledgeable and skilled in different areas. This will provide the staff team with a more in-depth understanding of children and young people's needs. The staff spoken to by the inspector confirm that the consistency of the work being done is improved because of the skilled leadership and management.

The registered manager maintains excellent relationships with all the young people. She is always ready to stop what she is doing and attend to them if there is a need. This is hands-on management, which clearly prioritises the needs of the young people. She sets an example by listening and counselling but also by putting clear boundaries and expectations in place. The young people have a regard for this approach and seek her out when they need to.

The good leadership and management of the home has been paramount in helping the young people make progress in their lives. The registered manager is clear about what progress has been made and what progress can be made. She is ambitious for the children and young people in her care, and is moulding a staff team that can be equally ambitious.

Over the year since the registered manager has been in post, she has formed a network of professional contacts with specialist workers and other agencies. She is quick to discuss relevant issues with them and quick to ask for a service when it will benefit a young person. She is happy to challenge others when a service is not provided or when it falls short of the expected quality.

There was one requirement from the last inspection, which has been met. At this inspection, no requirements are made, but one recommendation is made in relation to engaging a local authority to agree risks.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Sheila Errington

Registered manager: Katie Doyle

Inspector

Colin Imrie, social care inspector

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