

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC006921
Inspection date	20/03/2012
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	29/07/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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 progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection (March 2011)*.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to accommodate up to five children or young people. The Statement of Purpose specifies an age range of eight to 17 years. The children or young people may have complex needs including emotional and behavioural difficulties. The provider is an organisation and a limited company, conducting a number of children's homes.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **satisfactory** progress.

The overall inspection judgement at the last full inspection in July 2011 was good. At this inspection the home was asked to appoint a permanent manager to run the service, for records relating to restraints to be clearly legible and for management monitoring procedures to be in line with requirements. Additionally, the home was asked to consider improving the way in which it records the occasions when young people leave the home without permission and for individual care plans to show more evidence of the reviewing of progress. A large majority of these issues have been addressed. The home has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

A new acting manager was appointed by the company last year and is fully in post. An application for the acting manager to be registered as manager for the service has been submitted to Ofsted and is currently undergoing due process. The home appears to be experiencing a settled period with staff and young people commenting that the general atmosphere is calm and relaxed. Staff stated that they felt very well supported by the new acting manager and that the home was being run very well.

Young people say they enjoy living in the home and are well looked after by staff who are caring and understand their specific needs.

Records of restraint are clear to read and understandable in content and description with staff using appropriate terms. The acting manager reviews each incident of restraint with staff and young people alike being offered de-brief sessions to talk about the matter in question. The levels of restraint are very low with the idea of de-escalation as a core principle of behaviour management strategies. Staff receive training in physical intervention techniques and implement them only when absolutely necessary.

The acting manager completes monthly monitoring reviews of care practices within the home which are recorded and kept. Each report focuses on areas of care as outlined by Schedule 6 and generally in accordance with Regulation 34. However, the reviews lack an evaluation or analysis of practice and none have yet to be forwarded

to Ofsted as required on a six monthly basis.

Occasions when young people leave the home without permission are recorded appropriately. Improvements have been made in practice and procedure to consider the need for young people to be talked to more routinely after they return. A cause for concern format has been introduced that links directly with key work sessions in a more formalised approach to addressing such issues.

A new care planning process ensures the progress and development of each young person is reviewed and updated regularly. Care plans identify individual needs and how these will be met by staff. Each plan is an active document which is updated at least once every three months with the details of any progress made and thus allows for greater awareness of how well the plan is working.

In general the home offers young people a satisfactory environment in which to live. The home is in a suitable condition and provides an appropriate level of comfort, space and facilities. Some damage had been recently caused by young people near their bedrooms, although swift actions were taken to rectify such damage and to plan for redecoration. However, several areas of the home could only be accessed via an electronic fob system operated by staff, including the kitchen and main lounge. Young people did not raise this as a concern and the restriction of such movement to these areas did not appear to have been used to enforce compliance. A discussion took place with the acting manager to ensure the service were aware that the restriction of normal movement within a children's home is not permitted unless the home were a licensed secure unit. Plans were subsequently put in place to have the system switched off and deactivated.

The majority of young people attend education in statutory placements with attendance rates being reasonably high. The setting have obtained the services of a home tutor who is able to provide on-site education to young people not in receipt of an educational placement. The tutor also plays a lead role in liaising with local education authorities and in identifying suitable placements for their specific educational needs. A suitably equipped education room is situated in the home with young people able to access support at a pace more suited to their needs.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that an evaluation of the monthly monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6 is sent to HMCI at six monthly intervals (Volume 5, statutory guidance, para.3.14)
- ensure that young people do not have their movements around the home restricted as a matter of routine, notably the kitchen and lounge areas. (NMS 3.19)

