

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14/02/2013
Inspector	Valerie Shephard
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	19/06/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a private children's home that is part of a large national organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.

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.

Progress

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

This interim inspection has focused on the progress made by the home since the previous inspection when the overall judgement was good. The home has made good progress in all areas, improving the quality of care and outcomes for young people.

The manager has positively addressed the only recommendation made at the last inspection. This pertained to the condition and décor of the home particularly in relation to the outside resource room. A programme of decoration within the home has created a more pleasant environment. Young people have chosen new colours for their bedrooms and the main living areas of the home are looking smarter. In relation to the outside resource room, this has proved to be a bigger challenge. An assessment of the building has indicated that significant remedial work is required to make sure that the building is safe. Consequently the resource room is currently not in use and young people do not have access to it to ensure their safety.

After a period of staffing difficulties, the home has appointed new members of staff. As a result, there has been a consequent reduction in the use of bank staff.

However, a core group of bank staff still cover shifts where there are gaps due to sickness or leave. This does not impact on young people as these individuals know them well and are able to provide continuity of care. The assistant manager has recently relocated temporarily to another home; however, arrangements are already in place to secure a replacement.

Young people continue to enjoy good quality stable placements and overall improvement in outcomes. All are in school and attendance is excellent. Young people are enthusiastic about sport and fully participate in a range of activities including running, football, horse riding and swimming. One young person currently acts as a children's champion which involves participation in children's forums and feedback to the resident's meetings. Some young people now experience unsupervised time away from the home. They benefit from the trust afforded them and enjoy proving they are able to keep themselves safe and return home on time. These opportunities assist young people to develop social and independence skills which have a positive effect on their self-esteem and confidence. Young people actively engage in their therapy which assists them to understand their experiences and develop emotional resilience for the future.

The home has employed effective strategies to manage behavioural difficulties. An example of this is in relation to the use of bad language within the home. The staff team is motivated to try and reduce incidents where young people are verbally abusive to each other and staff. The introduction of a clear warning system followed by a sanction has been successful in addressing this problem. A further example is in relation to bullying. During individual sessions and meetings with young people, staff are pro-active in challenging bullying. As a result there has been a significant decrease in incidents of bullying. With effective support from staff these measures provide young people with opportunities to change their behaviour.

Staff use rewards creatively in an effort to tackle incidents of young people going missing from the home, with improvements for some young people during the past few months. Where this problem continues, staff actively seek meetings with professionals from the placing authority to discuss strategies to address the issue. This ensures that there is on-going assessment of the extent to which the home keeps young people safe.

The home is subject to effective management and continues to show capacity to improve. The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths of the home and areas for further development. Rigorous monitoring of young people's progress and welfare ensures their safety. New initiatives have assisted with the analysis of data in relation to allegations, restraint and incidents of young people going missing from home. The active use of questionnaires from professionals provides purposeful feedback which the manager incorporates into the evaluation of the home's effectiveness. Routine consultation with young people ensures their views and opinions inform how the home is run. The manager deals with complaints effectively and efficiently and learns from these to inform the future direction of the home.

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*.