

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	20/02/2012
Inspector	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	02/06/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide care, support and accommodation for five young people of either gender between the ages of 12 and 16 years old. The home is owned by a private provider and is a family-run business. The Registered Manager is also the registered provider. The house has a kitchen/diner, lounge, meeting room, bathroom, five en-suite first-floor bedrooms and a garden to the rear of the premises.

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 home is currently judged as good overall and is judged to be making good progress at this interim inspection. Outcomes for young people are positive and the service has successfully addressed all requirements and recommendations raised at the previous inspection. No requirements or recommendations are made as a result of this inspection.

Continued improvement is noted in several key areas. The previous inspection highlighted young people's lack of engagement in educational opportunities. Young people who are not engaged in educational activity or do not go school/college now have the opportunity to participate with a tailored educational home tuition programme. This assists with young people's learning while they await admission to appropriate educational resources.

Young people now have access to a structured independent living skills programme

that is geared towards meeting the specific needs of individuals as they prepare to leave local authority care. Previously, staff efforts to prepare young people for independent living were ineffective. The home now has in place a highly-structured programme that both assesses young people's practical skills and provides them with support and supervision to further develop daily living skills in preparation for adulthood.

Managers of the service have successfully addressed shortfalls noted in staff's administration of young people's medication. Young people benefit from a safer system that is carefully monitored by managers. Young people and staff have benefitted from additional staff training and policy development with regards to the management of medication. The home's medication recording tool has also been further developed to minimise medication recording errors. This ensures that young people's medication regimes are managed safely.

The service has made significant improvement to its overall monitoring systems, which act to improve the quality of care provided. This is of clear benefit to young people in placement. The previous inspection noted that Regulation 33 reports were not consistently being conducted nor forwarded to Ofsted as required. This has now been resolved with monitoring visits regularly being held on a monthly basis. Subsequent reports are sufficiently detailed, review all required matters and outline any shortfalls. Reports are now appropriately made available to Ofsted. Regulation 34 reviews are conducted on a monthly basis and cover all matters as outlined in Schedule 6 of the regulations. The home's monitoring systems are robust, wide-ranging and proactively include feedback from young people and other interested parties. Managers of the home use this feedback to review and improve upon service provision.

Young people benefit from staff's co-ordinated approach to care, in particular, the effective working relationship between staff and representatives of placing authorities. Staff have good background knowledge of young people's identified needs at the point of referral due to clear and comprehensive information sought from the local authority. The home's care planning process is now robust and thorough. Young people have a good understanding of their placement plans and objectives, and work with professionals to achieve identified targets.

Since the last inspection, managers have developed a child-focussed approach to placement planning. Young people now have a dedicated file for their use and upkeep that outline placement goals and targets. Young people record for themselves using age-appropriate worksheets, placement developments and issues. Young people are able to chart placement progress and/or difficulties. This new way of working helps keep young people appraised of placement developments and actively involved in placement decision-making. Young people feel their views are taken seriously and that they contribute in a meaningful way to decision-making about their lives while in placement.

Staff of the home have improved upon its management of notifications to Ofsted, ensuring that all significant events are appropriately recorded and shared. This issue

was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Three recommendations were made at the last inspection. These related to the sharing of the home's child protection policies with local authority child protection officers, staff's increased contribution of pathway planning process and the update of the children's guide. All these issues have since been satisfactorily resolved.

Young feel they are making steady progress at the home and feel the home's services meet their needs well. Young people and staff share a trusting relationship, which helps young people explore openly placement issues. Young people feel safe at the home and have confidence that staff are able to protect them. Bullying is not an issue for the home and young people are generally respectful with each other. Staff work effectively to address young people's unacceptable behaviour. Young people are engaged in education and live healthy lifestyles. There have been no reported complaints or incidents of restraint since the last inspection. Young people benefit from clear policies and procedures in place if they are away from the home without permission. Young people enjoy their surroundings and feel the home is well run. The provider demonstrates a commitment to continue to improve service provision. Good progress has been made to enhance the quality of care which acts to impact positively on outcomes for young people.

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)*.