

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023737
Inspection date	25/03/2013
Inspector	Kenneth Smith
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	19/06/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately owned children's home is part of a large organisation which operates many children's homes in the area. The organisation is also able to provide schooling for children with special educational needs. The home can accommodate up to three young people aged who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the time of this visit the home was being used exclusively for girls, but may offer a service to both genders.

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**.

At the previous inspection on 19 June 2012 the home was adjudged to have a good overall effectiveness. Since that time the service has continued to grow under the leadership of a manager now twelve months in post. Young people resident at that time have moved on and the service is now configured around the younger children who have moved into the home in the autumn.

At the previous inspection two recommendations were set and the home has successfully met both of these. One of these was a straightforward updating of the children's guide, which has been done. The second was to further promote children's good health, specifically regarding smoking cessation. At the time of this inspection no child residing in the home smoked; evidence of keyworkers raising this topic with a young person previously accommodated and successfully reducing the amount smoked was seen.

The young people currently living in the home have engaged well with staff and are making real progress. On admission both had very poor educational attendance and this has turned around. Both are now attending school five half days a week, and this is being progressively built up to full days.

Records and discussion demonstrated that significant progress has been made for both children towards leading a structured and stable home life. This has been achieved through strong relationship building by staff, and the introduction of more nurturing daily routines which have helped children feel a sense of belonging. For example: breakfasts are now prepared in advance so that children come down to a welcoming dining room where they are looked after rather than expected to prepare things themselves; bed-times include a settling routine where a dedicated member of staff spends time with each child as they go to bed preparing them for sleep. These developments are especially pertinent to the age and attachment needs of the children in placement.

The house has, for some time, been used exclusively for girls. Earlier in the year there were males on the staff team but it has become a female only team. The Registered Manager was clear that she would hope to diversify this and it had not occurred deliberately. There is some consideration about how children in placement continue to have male adult role models, but this is not formalised or especially frequent.

The home is well maintained and provides a warm, domestic-style environment.

Since the last inspection three young people have left the home. Two of these have been difficult discharges but evidence decisive action by the management team in advocating and securing alternatives for young people, when this is clearly required. Where situations of crisis management have arisen the actions have successfully minimised the impact of this upon others living in the home. Young people who have had high risk of exploitation, going missing and self-harm have been kept safer through both the immediate care and the wider advocacy for them.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- grow the staff team to include staff of both genders or make explicit in the Statement of Purpose how children are to maintain relationships with members of the opposite gender. (NMS 17.10)

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*.