

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	David Putnam
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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

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered for up to three children or young people.

Progress

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

At the last inspection, the home was judged satisfactory. Four requirements were made. These have been met. An application for Registered Manager has now been received by Ofsted and is being progressed. Key policies have been updated. However, not all staff have read the new documents. Consequently, any impact these new policies have on young people is negated. One recommendation was made. This has been met. Young people are now aware that they can access records made about them by staff. In general, they choose not to take advantage of this opportunity. Senior managers within the parent organisation continue to support the acting manager. The standards of care are maintained.

Young people in the home have experienced some recent changes of staff. From a relatively small staff group two staff have moved on. Recruitment of replacement staff is on-going. The acting manager tries to promote consistency and continuity for young people by bringing in staff who know them. For example, one additional member of staff works in the school the young people attend. However, young people say they do not know the names of new staff.

Placement plans, risk assessments and plans for providing daily care of young people are in place. These documents are reviewed at regular intervals. However, permanent and temporary additional staff do not consistently sign these documents to show they have read and understood them. Staff say that they have not read new policies that were updated following the last inspection. The same staff acknowledge that they have been asked to do so. These shortfalls have the potential to negatively affect the care provided to young people. A recommendation is made that managers ensure the work of staff is consistent with these key documents, the Children's Homes Regulations and the national minimum standards.

Young people over the age of 16 years do not benefit from having formal pathway plans in place. Staff recognise the need to develop such plans in conjunction with placing social workers. Initial information relating to core skills and abilities has been gathered. Relevant young people do not currently engage with the process and struggle to look to the future. A recommendation is made to progress this area of work.

Young people attend education provided through the parent organisation. Daily reports emailed to the home record how young people respond to individual targets. These clearly indicate that they are doing well. One young person has received maximum points each day since returning from the half-term break. The emotional and psychological health needs of some young people are met through the provision of therapy. The option of therapy is available to all young people through the parent organisation. Close and supportive relationships with staff help some young people gain confidence. This is demonstrated by a willingness and ability to make decisions for themselves. However, some young people describe how they keep their thoughts to themselves and choose not to discuss things with staff. Staff acknowledge that it can take time to build relationships. Staff provide continuity of care for young people through supporting them in contact with family, meetings and hearings outside the home. Staff consistently provide the opportunity for young people to talk if they want to.

Young people regularly attend residents' meetings. Staff encourage them to make choices and decisions. One young person's room is being redecorated in colours of their choice. The acting manager confirmed that all young people's bedrooms will be repainted. The young people affected by this decision said they were unaware of it. Young people continue to play football and take part in other activities. Since the last inspection, young people have joined a local gym which they attend regularly to improve their health and fitness.

The home's Statement of Purpose has recently been updated. Work is in progress to review and update the children's guide. The parent organisation aims to do this with significant input from children and young people from different homes within the group.

Changes to the organisation's safeguarding policy have clarified certain key areas. Additional guidance is provided to staff on how to respond in certain circumstances. The requirement for staff to refer cases to the Local Authority Designated Officer is clarified. Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly and effectively in a way that protects young people. Young people are provided with an appropriate level of information following allegations.

Managers and staff demonstrate an on-going commitment to provide the best possible service for the young people in their care.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the work of all staff is consistent with regulations, national minimum standards and the home's policies and procedures (NMS 21.3)
- ensure the home contributes to the development of a pathway plan for 'eligible'

care leavers and works collaboratively with the young person's social worker or personal advisor in implementing the plan. (NMS 12.2)