

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023746
Inspection date	24/02/2014
Inspector	David Putnam
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	19/09/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2014

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

The home is owned by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for a maximum of three children, who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children living in the home are able to access education through separately registered provision which is managed by the same organisation. Therapy or counselling is also available to children if this is appropriate.

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 **satisfactory progress**.

At the last full inspection the overall effectiveness of the home was judged to be outstanding. Two recommendations were made to further improve the quality of the service provided to young people. The Registered Manager has fully addressed one of these and partially addressed the other.

Emergency evacuation drills now take place at various times of the day and night. This includes occasions when young people are in bed. By practicing at different times, young people and staff learn how to follow the emergency escape plan and grow in confidence to respond appropriately in distinct circumstances.

The quality of assessments that inform young people's preparation for independence show signs of improvement. By identifying areas of strength and those that require development, work with individual young people is given a clearer focus. Placing social workers commend staff for the way they promote independent living skills.

Young people demonstrate confidence and pride in the abilities they develop. However, use of the organisation's own toolkit to support this work is not consistently applied. Sections relating to some fundamental areas of work remain blank, meaning that specific aspects of work with young people have not progressed since the last inspection. Consequently, the system established to monitor the quality and adequacy of records maintained within the home has not been completely effective.

Young people continue to speak positively about their experiences of living in the home. They confirm that they feel safe and get on well with staff and each other. Young people stress the importance of staying in touch with members of their family. Managers and staff work closely with placing authorities to promote positive experiences of contact for young people. This plays an important role in maintaining links for young people and promotes their chances and opportunities when preparing to return to their home authorities.

Placing social workers express praise for the care young people receive saying, 'I cannot fault the service that the organisation and the home have offered.' When young people present challenging behaviours, social workers commend the staff team for remaining consistent, showing resolve and being willing to stand by young people. This provides the opportunity to break potentially damaging cycles of behaviour that historically have resulted in regular disruptions for young people.

Despite some young people continuing to present challenging and at times, aggressive behaviours, the use of restraint remains rare. When this does occur it is always in line with the regulatory framework and is effectively recorded. Records include clear discussion and reflection with young people after the event. This enables effective monitoring by the Registered Manager to consider possible changes in practice or approach. The frequency of young people going missing has increased since the last inspection. However, staff continue to act promptly and do all they can to locate and safeguard young people when this happens. Managers pro-actively communicate with local police and placing authorities to strategically address the issues relating to specific young people.

Reviews of the quality of care are undertaken by the Registered Manager at least every three months. These are routinely submitted to Ofsted and enable on-going monitoring of the service. This inspection did identify evidence of consultation with young people, their families and placing authorities. However, this is not consistently incorporated into the reviews of the quality of care and does not clearly link to any improvements within the service.

Overall, documentation relating to young people continues to be of a high standard. Young people contribute to the formation of plans that set out how they will be cared for on a daily basis. Similarly, assessments of potential risk and the measures used to minimise the impact of any risks are shared with and signed by young people. The contributions young people make helps them to feel that their views are valued. However, this inspection highlighted that in some cases there is a short delay in

updating placement plans following statutory reviews of young people's care. As a result, actions identified to progress plans for young people are not always communicated effectively.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. Ensure the system shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1)(b) and (3))	30/04/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed (NMS 22.1)
- ensure that the result of all statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified. (NMS 25.8)

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*.