

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Seka Graovac
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The provider is a registered childcare charity and housing association that has a number of different services registered with Ofsted. This home provides care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people with emotional and behavioural 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 **satisfactory progress**.

At the full inspection that took place in May 2013, the overall effectiveness of the home was judged to be good. All aspects of the provision that were evaluated at that time were judged to be good. This included the outcomes for children and young people, quality of care, safeguarding and leadership and management.

The management was asked to improve the reporting format for the six-monthly review of the quality of care and submit a copy of the report to Ofsted. A comprehensive report that clearly demonstrates good monitoring was received by Ofsted within the agreed timescale. The report focuses on the outcomes for children and young people. It evidences the positive difference that the home has made to the lives of children and young people.

Ofsted also recommended that the records of individual risk assessments and of medication are improved. The management and staff have taken both recommendations seriously.

Staff review the written individual children and young people's risk assessments on a monthly basis, or more frequently if needed. The assessments and the associated risk management plans are now much more comprehensive. They reflect better the home's good safeguarding practice. A section on the protective strategies to minimise the risks of sexual exploitation has been made more detailed.

Staff have continued to work closely with the police and other support services to share information and promote children and young people's welfare. When two incidents concerning two different young people highlighted the increased risk of child sexual exploitation, staff took effective actions to promote their safety. One young person stopped going missing and exposing themselves to associated risks. The other young person gained insight into how the way they dressed and behaved increased the risks to their safety. They report now being better at keeping themselves safe.

Children and young people have healthy lifestyles and are generally in good health. The home's records demonstrate that they receive medication in the way that it was prescribed by their doctors. Staff receive regular training on the management of medication. The management carry out frequent audits of medication. However, the errors still happen. For example, a box of medication that staff bought over the counter recently has not been recorded. This means that the actual count of medicines and the records do not match. This undermines monitoring of the medication in the home.

The Registered Manager left mid-October 2013. A new manager has been appointed. This person is currently undergoing an induction programme and is applying to register with Ofsted. In the interim period, the home was managed by an experienced deputy manager.

Children and young people have continued to make good progress across many different aspects of their welfare. However, in the recent months, there has been a spate of incidents relating to altercations, threats of violence, verbal racial abuse and fights among the young people in the home. Ofsted received seven notifications in the period of three weeks, relating to the events that took place from 17 October to 6 November 2013, when the police were called to the home. On a number of these occasions, it was a young person who called the police.

Although the relationships between young people have improved recently, young people still feel uncertain about their experience of living in this home. On one side, they say that they love the home, but on the other side, they still feel a residual dissatisfaction connected with the incidents.

Staff are working closely with other professionals, including the children's social services, the multi-agency team and the safer neighbourhood team in the area to promote positive behaviours and harmonious relationships among children and young people in the home. The comprehensive and robust strategies that are implemented include individual and group mediation work.

The strategies have been effective. Children and young people have learnt to understand each other better and to better control their own behaviour. They have developed stronger emotional resilience and are more able to simply walk away when in a provocative situation. There have been no new incidents in the last four weeks.

Children and young people report that the atmosphere in the home has recently become much calmer and better. However, more time is needed for them to fully recover the trust in each other and adults who support them.

Despite the incidents in which a young person was verbally racially abusive to others, one young person highlighted, as the best thing about the home, how their racial, cultural and faith needs are met.

Children and young people have continued to regularly attend their education during the recent unsettled period in the home. Their positive engagement, learning, ambition and participation in the community have played a strong stabilizing part in what was a difficult time for all parties involved. They have continued to achieve in various aspects of their lives. Playing football on a semi-professional level remains a driving passion for some of them.

They enjoyed going on a summer holiday with staff. The home is proud that children and young people hosted a consultation session as part of the Parliamentary inquiry into rights and entitlements for looked after children and care leavers. They also actively supported and contributed to the setting up of a new children's home.

This home's physical environment has been very much improved. The programme of significant refurbishment included a newly designed kitchen and redecoration of the lounge, recreational room, the hallways and landings. During the three months period, children and young people fully observed agreed health and safety rules and were patient, flexible and mature around the inconveniences that the work has brought. They contributed to the design and colour schemes. They enjoy living in an environment that is decorated and furnished to a high standard.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- strengthen the positive culture in the home, so that affirmative relationships, constructive behaviours and harmonious atmosphere are the norm (NMS 3.2)
- improve the record keeping in respect of medication. (NMS 6.15)

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*.