

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033326
Inspection date	27/11/2012
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	12/06/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

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 and operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for six young people who experience behavioural and emotional 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 **inadequate progress**.

This interim inspection focuses on the progress made since the full inspection in June 2012 when the home was judged adequate for overall effectiveness. Inadequate progress has been made to address the ten requirements and four recommendations made. Two requirements are addressed and one in relation to the Statement of Purpose is partially met. Two recommendations are addressed. This insufficient level of progress does not drive improvement or stimulate good outcomes for young people who live at the home.

The home has experienced some changes since the last inspection. The Registered Manager has been absent from the home for more than 28 days. . Ofsted has been informed. Temporary management arrangements and a consistent, regularly supervised staff team ensure that young people do not experience further instability. However, the future management arrangements of the home are not clear.

In recent months, the home has been an unpredictable and volatile environment for young people to live. The main factor has been that some young people placed at

the home are not compatible with the existing, previously settled group of young people. This has created a challenging group dynamic in the home that has unsettled young people and has impacted on some of their behaviour. Young people's views, wishes and feelings are not consistently taken into account in all aspects of their care, which does not make them feel valued. Young people express dissatisfaction with some of the boundaries in the home and do not always feel listened to. Key work sessions provide some evidence that young people have some good engagement with staff, but young people's meetings are not well attended and when young people do attend, they are not child focused. This does not ensure that young people's views are promptly considered and acted on. Young people who have been restrained record their comments, but this is not evident when they receive a sanction. Young people do not feel that their complaints are listened to, so they do not make them. This does not promote their safety and welfare. Concerns raised by young people have been shared separately with the acting manager and social worker to investigate and respond to Ofsted. Staff have found it necessary to contact the police on a number of occasions for assistance when young people's behaviour has escalated out of their control. Similarly, accidents sustained by young people have required visits to the accident and emergency unit. Ofsted have not been notified on any of these events. This does not ensure independent scrutiny of practices in the home and does not promote young people's welfare.

The Statement of Purpose was reviewed in July 2012, but it has not been forwarded to Ofsted. This does not inform the regulatory body how the home will meet their aims and objectives and improve outcomes for young people.

Most young people refuse or are reluctant to engage in education, employment and training opportunities. This is despite the active encouragement from staff who have place a high value on their education. Plans in place to re-engage young people in educational activities are not sufficiently implemented to have a positive and measured impact. Young people's life chances are significantly undermined when their educational opportunities are not fully embedded.

Young people express anger about the institutional practice that continues with respect to the locking of internal doors in the home and restricting electricity in their bedrooms at night. This is poor child care practice that does not support a positive and caring homely environment. This is despite a clear directive from senior managers to cease this activity. Not all social workers were aware that this practice continued and they do not agree with it. This arrangement has contributed to some of the challenging behaviours in the home and young people's negative views about home life. Young people say that the internal doors, with the exception of their bedrooms are locked during school hours. This means that access to food and drink during the day are limited. Young people say that they do not like asking staff for food and drink, preferring to access these items themselves. . In one example, a key was removed without staff consent by a young person. The key was used to open the kitchen door and some young people helped themselves to food and drink. Young people's sense of dignity, trust, independence and socially acceptable behaviour is diminishing while these restrictive practices are in operation.

Young people say that the home does not feel like one because of the aforementioned staff practices. The home environment has deteriorated and damage caused by young people demonstrates that young people currently do not respect their home. The local authority has agreed plans to redecorate and furnish the home with staff and young people to raise the physical standards in the home. This ensures that young people take ownership and pride in their home.

Regulation 33 monitoring visits on behalf of the local authority do not involve consultation with parents and relatives. It is not clear how the visitor forms an opinion of the standards of care provided in the home when consultation is limited. Regulation 34 monitoring systems are descriptive and do not evaluate the quality of service delivered to young people. Monitoring has missed shortfalls, such as notifying Ofsted about significant events, and Regulation 33 actions in relation to addressing practice issues, such as young people who go missing from home. Young people, their parents and placing social workers are not consulted during monitoring, so it is not clear how their views influence improvement. A summary report under Regulation 34 has not been prepared and forwarded to the regulator, Ofsted. This impedes Ofsted from monitoring how the manager identifies any trends and issues of concern so that they can continue to improve young people's quality of care and outcomes.

Good progress has been made to improve some of the documentation in the home. Risk assessments are clearer and show how young people's risky behaviours are managed. Young people's records are better and ensure an up-to-date record of their progress. A written development plan is implemented with respect to the home. This confirms the continuation of the home's operation and improvement plans.

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
5 (2001)	ensure the children's home has a clear Statement of Purpose which is available to and understood by staff and children and reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance, and in particular, the HMCI is notified of any changes to the statement within 28 days (Regulation 5(a)&(b))	31/12/2012
18 (2001)	promote the educational achievement of children, in particular ensure the children make use of educational facilities appropriate to their age, aptitude, needs, interests and potential (Regulation 18(1)(a))	28/02/2013
11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children	17/12/2012

	accommodated there; in particular, review the practice of locking internal doors and cease restricting the electricity in young people's bedrooms (Regulation 11(1)(a))	
30 (2001)	ensure that, in relation to the children's home, if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person without delay notifies the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table, in particular serious incidents necessitating calling the police to the home and serious illness/accident sustained by a child (Regulation 30(1))	31/12/2012
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are reasonably decorated, maintained and suitably furnished throughout (Regulation 31 (2)(e))	31/01/2013
33 (2001)	ensure the person carrying out the visit under this regulation specifically demonstrates how parents and relatives views are used to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33(4)(a))	31/12/2012
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person establishes and maintains an effective system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home and provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities (Regulation 34(1)(a)(b) and (3))	31/12/2012
34 (2001)	supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted for the purpose of paragraph 1 of this regulation (Regulation 34(2))	31/12/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children know that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account in all aspects of their care; are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all circumstances; and know how to obtain support and make a complaint (NMS 1)
- ensure that where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home; specifically in relation to sanctions imposed (NMS 3.18)

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*.