

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	22/03/2012
Inspector	Stella Lovie
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	23/11/2011
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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 home provides care and support for four young people of either sex with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by the local authority.

Progress

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

The home was judged to be good at the full inspection in November 2011. There were three requirements made, all of which have been met. There were three recommendations made, two of which have been met.

Young people continue to enjoy a good quality of care delivered by a well-trained and dedicated staff team. As one young person comments, 'It's absolutely brilliant here; the staff are all lovely; they look after us well. We do lots of great activities. We have our say in the young people's meetings and can get things done through this'.

Some young people have very good school attendance and are on track to achieve significantly in their exams. However, other young people still continue to struggle with their motivation to attend their educational provision. This is impacting negatively on their future life chances. Staff are working hard to try to turn this around and are hopeful that they will be successful in this.

In recent months, there have been a relatively high number of serious incidents related to the behaviour of young people in the home. It is evident that these have had an adverse effect on young people's sense of well-being. Staff are endeavouring to manage this challenging behaviour in creative and consistent ways. This includes helping all the young people to be tolerant and understanding about each other's needs. The positive behaviour strategies in use no longer involve the imposition of financial penalties as disciplinary measures, as was the case at the full inspection.

Young people's information is now being recorded more effectively so that it will be helpful to them when they access their files now or in the future. However, the missing from home records are still fragmented across various different paperwork systems.

Young people continue to be kept safe in this home. Practice has been enhanced by the development of the home's own safeguarding guidance to support the over-riding Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. This means that staff have clearer guidelines about their specific roles and responses in any safeguarding situation. Young people's safety is therefore better ensured.

Leadership and management of the home continue to be generally good. However, the Registered Manager acknowledges that there have been some slippages in her oversight and input into the home. This is due to her frequent absence as she is on a mostly full-time professional course. For example, while the Regulation 33 visits have improved in terms of consultation with young people and staff since the last inspection, they have not been sent through to Ofsted for several months. Likewise, the Regulation 34 monitoring has not been able to benefit from stakeholder feedback despite there being a system in place to acquire this. There has been limited management time to address these areas. As a consequence, the quality assurance arrangements are less robust than they could be.

Overall, the quality of care in the home continues to be good, and all the requirements and most of the recommendations have been met. However, there is little evidence of continuing improvement in terms of educational attendance and outcomes for the young people. Also, some areas of leadership and management are beginning to be undermined by the manager's prolonged absence from the service. The home is therefore judged to be making satisfactory progress.

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
33 (2001)	ensure that the registered provider supplies a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4) (c) to HMCI (Regulation 33 (5) (a))	28/05/2012
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person establishes and maintains a system which provides for consultation with parents and placing authorities, with particular regard to ensuring that feedback is obtained. (Regulation 34 (1) (3))	28/05/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in light of those reasons, with particular regard to ensuring that the information is not fragmented across a range of paperwork systems. (NMS 5.10)

