

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	24/01/2013
Inspector	Dennis Bradley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	14/08/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority children's home offers short-break care and accommodation for up to six young people of either sex aged 12 years to 17 years. It is registered to care for young people whose main needs arise from emotional or 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 **good progress**.

The home was judged to be good at the last full inspection. The home provides time-limited, short break placements for young people. It is evident that, during their stays at the home, young people benefit from the care, support and guidance they receive. When asked what was good about staying at the home a young person said 'Everything'. Asked what the home could do better young people replied 'Nothing'.

Since the last inspection the manager and staff have worked effectively to further improve the service. There was one requirement and three recommendations made at the last inspection and appropriate action has been taken to address the majority of these. The manager now ensures Ofsted is notified of any serious illness or accident sustained by a young person staying at the home. This enables the regulator to monitor the action taken by the home regarding such incidents and the outcome. The people who carry out monthly visits to the home to monitor the service it provides, now regularly consult the young people about the quality of care they receive. This helps ensure young people are cared for appropriately and are safeguarded.

Young people also take part in regular young people's meetings where they are asked for their views about, for example, the activities that are available and the standard of the meals and accommodation. Appropriate arrangements are now in place to ensure the young people receive feedback about any requests or suggestions they make at these meetings. This helps ensure the young people feel valued and that their views have been taken seriously.

Although work has been carried out to develop young people's placement plans they still do not identify clear, measureable outcomes. This includes clear, measurable outcomes in placement plans to help identify and evaluate the progress being made in meeting each young person's individual needs. This recommendation will be repeated.

The management team continues to provide effective leadership to staff to enable them to provide good outcomes for the young people. The support young people receive from staff helps them make good progress from their starting points, during their stays at the home. For example, most do not engage in risky behaviours such as going missing. This support, and the effective communication between staff and parents, helps young people, where appropriate, to continue living with their families.

There are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling how the home is run and young people are cared for. For example, the management team ensures any recommendations made as a result of external monitoring visits are addressed quickly and effectively. There are also good internal quality monitoring systems in place for reviewing the service and young people's welfare and progress. The management team use the outcomes of the monitoring of the service to assess how it can improve. For example, improvements have been made to the way in which staff consult parents about the progress their children are making. This helps staff plan and evaluate the support they provide to the young people and their families. Arrangements are also in place for group work to be carried out with some young people to help safeguard them from the risks of sexual exploitation.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard and provides young people with a homely, pleasant place in which to stay.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people are cared for in line with their individual placement plan. In particular, ensure these plans focus on clear measurable outcomes. (NMS 25)

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*.