

Inspection report for children's home

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

Date of last inspection	18/10/2011
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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

The children's home is located in a village and provides accommodation for up to three young people aged 12 to 17 years old who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The provider is a local authority.

Progress

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

At the last full inspection, the home was judged as good. There were two recommendations made that have been acted upon. The Registered Manager has implemented new residential placement plans for young people that comprehensively cover all aspects of their care, including arrangements for behaviour management. The recording of physical interventions has also been subject to review ensuring that all entries take full account of such events. Clear arrangements are in place to ensure that all records are routinely monitored and any challenges to practice documented and addressed. This ensures good scrutiny of practice within the home.

Young people are settled in this home and are well supported by staff. Young people say that staff care about them and always try to keep them safe, commenting that 'they ask you where you are going, who you are going to be with and when you will be back.' The home has been rigorous in pursuing day-to-day concerns and has developed some highly effective partnerships. An example of this is frequent communication and close working arrangements with local police. This has ensured a very proactive approach to promoting young people's safety and well-being. Robust safeguarding practice is a clear strength within this home ensuring that young people's vulnerabilities are identified and appropriately addressed.

Since the last inspection, young people's attendance and progress at school has been variable despite the efforts made by staff to encourage this. However, staff have been creative in the use of appropriate incentives and all young people are now attending education with plans in place to work on developing their potential.

Staff are attentive to the health needs of young people and seek to engage them in activities that will promote healthy living. Young people are informed and encouraged to make changes to their lifestyle that will be of long-term benefit to them. For some young people this includes encouragement and support with smoking cessation. Staff enjoy working in this home and say that they work well together as a team. Staff view good communication as a strength they possess that supports their practice, providing consistency and continuity for the young people in their care.

The home is clean and tidy and a maintenance programme is in place. However,

although generally well maintained, there are some areas showing signs of wear and tear and minor damage. This includes areas such as young people's bedrooms and the living room where a light fitting is missing. Young people say that they are comfortable in their home and that staff make their friends welcome. This enables them to socialise with their peers and engage positively with the local community.

The Registered Manager maintains a programme of regular monitoring and has further reviewed practice over a six-month period. A comprehensive report identifying emerging trends and patterns and actions taken has been completed but this has not been submitted to Ofsted. The Registered Provider has ensured regular monthly visits by an independent person. Young people's views on a variety of issues are obtained during these visits and through regular young people's meetings.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated, this relates specifically to damage in young people's bedrooms and their living room area (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that in relation to Regulation 34, a copy of the monitoring report is completed at six monthly intervals, sent to Ofsted within 28 days of its completion and identifies any trends and issues of concern arising from monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6. (Volume 5, 3.14)