

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16/01/2012
Inspector	Paul Scott
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	16/05/2011
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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 children's home is operated by a local authority and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children from the age of 11 years to 17 years. The home cares for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and has recently developed respite services for young people requiring short-term placements. Services have also been developed to support young people in need who are registered as refugees.

Progress

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

This interim inspection has focused on the progress made by the home since the last full inspection, at which the overall judgement was outstanding. The home has made good progress and young people continue to live in a safe, caring and supportive environment that enables them to make good progress in many aspects of their lives.

The manager has successfully dealt with the two requirements and one of the two good practice recommendations made at the last inspection. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure Ofsted are notified of any child protection enquiries. The manager ensures Ofsted is notified within 28 days of any revision of the home's Statement of Purpose. A more robust approach to the recruitment of staff means vulnerable young people are protected further from potential harm. One recommendation has been carried over. The manager has introduced a system for recording young people's school attendance. However, these records are incomplete and, therefore, do not provide an up-to-date picture of young people's attendance at school.

There have been some changes to the young people living at the home. A number of young people have been well supported to make a planned and successful transition to independent living. The home has continued to maintain positive links with young people after they have left to ensure they get the right support they need to overcome the challenges of living independently. The home has provided respite care for a small number of young people requiring short-term placements. The manager and staff have effectively managed these placements to ensure the impact on the existing group of young people is kept to a minimum. For example, staff talk to young people and help them prepare for new young people arriving. Staff provide personal support, tailored to reflect young people's development and meet their changing needs. For example, staff support young people to rebuild relationships with their family to enable them to return home to live with their parents.

Admissions to the home have been well managed. Young people's needs are

assessed at the point of admission and arrangements put into place to ensure their individual needs are met. For example, education placements are sourced quickly and, as a result, young people's education is disrupted as little as possible in order that they can attend and achieve. The home has recently appointed an education champion. This has further improved links with education providers to give young people the opportunity to achieve their academic potential. Young people continue to benefit from being cared for by a well-established and competent staff team who know and provide effectively for their needs. Staff encourage young people to take more responsibility for themselves, appropriate to their age and level of understanding. As a result, young people are taking an increasingly responsible attitude towards their health, behaviour and personal safety.

The manager uses a number of quality assurance systems to monitor the operation of the home, young people's welfare and progress, and the home's records. Changes to Regulation 33 and 34 reporting formats have been made between inspections and these formats better capture data and allow more robust evaluations of the available information to take place. However, the manager is not using the information provided in Regulation 33 reports to ensure action is taken to address any identified shortfalls. The manager consults regularly with young people about the quality of care and support they experience. However, this information is not reflected in the manager's Regulation 34 report. These shortfalls have minimal impact on the welfare of young people, who all speak positively about their experiences whilst living at the home.

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
34 (2001)	ensure the system for monitoring matters set out in Schedule 6 shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authority. (Regulation 34 (3))	30/01/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an up-to date record of information about each child's school attendance (NMS 8.7)

- ensure action is taken to address any issues of concern that are identified or raised by the person undertaking regulation 33 visits. (NMS 21.9)