

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035499
Inspection date	16/02/2012
Inspector	Steve Pearson
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	26/10/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 provided by a local authority and is registered to care for up to six young people with 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 **satisfactory** progress.

At the previous inspection in October 2011, Ofsted rated the overall effectiveness of the home to be satisfactory and made four requirements and seven recommendations. Since then the registered persons have met all the requirements and most of the recommendations. As a result, the care provision has improved in several ways. The procedures for handling formal complaints are more robust because the recording provides for a clear account of what was found in the investigation and whether the complaint was upheld or not.

The Registered Manager and staff now inform Ofsted without delay if a significant event occurs. This helps the regulator be up to date about serious incidents and how they are being dealt with.

The recording of medication is now compliant with legislation because a copy of the administration records is now kept in each young person's case file as well as in the home's own file. This provides for improved accountability if access to the information is needed in the longer term.

There is also greater accountability for the use of sanctions and restraints. The recording books are bound and pages are numbered; a second copy of the details is recorded in each young person's file. The staff also now record information about sanctions and restraints in more detail. School attendance is now monitored more closely to enable progress over time to be evaluated. Children's residential placement plans are also now clearer.

However, three recommendations remain unmet and so have been repeated. Children are not being fully supported with their education because they have not been provided with sufficient study and/or desk space to do school or college work in private. The home's written development plan is still not robust enough because the registered provider has not added sufficient clarity about the home's function and resourcing for the next 12 months. The staff team as a whole is not yet sufficiently qualified because some of those staff in place when the national minimum standards commenced in 2011 have not yet achieved a level three qualification. However, they are all currently studying for this.

The registered persons evaluate the quality of care provided to the young people on a regular basis. Once a month an external visitor calls at the home and monitors how well young people are being cared for. They assess the necessary information and consult with young people, their parents or relatives and the staff. However, their recommendations are not always followed up in a timely manner. For example, in five consecutive reports they have recommended removal of graffiti from the back door but this still has not been completed.

The Registered Manager also monitors the quality of care on a regular basis. This involves a check of all the necessary issues as specified in legislation. However, the range of evidence is not sufficiently broad because the views of children's social workers are not incorporated into the reports.

Young people also have a significant say in how the home is run. Every two weeks an independent person chairs a young people's meeting. A member of staff also attends. These people are always the same which provides for good consistency. Each meeting starts with a look back to the previous issues in order to follow up on outcomes or decisions made. Details of any forthcoming meetings are also displayed on the young people's notice board so that they can have the opportunity to attend and to add any issues to the agenda. Young people also have regular one-to-one discussions with their key worker and these help to ensure their wishes are given full consideration and put into effect where appropriate.

Educational outcomes are not as positive as at the previous inspection as overall attendance figures have fallen. However, there have been improvements in other areas, such as young people's contact with their families and young people's behaviour within the children's 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 that the system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 provides for consultation with the placing authority. (Regulation 34 (3))	31/03/2012

Recommendations

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

- provide suitable support and facilities to meet the educational needs of young people. In particular, this means the provision of study and/or desk space to enable young people to do school or college work in private (NMS 8.4)
- maintain a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource (NMS 15.2)
- ensure all staff recruited before 1 April 2011 have attained the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma or a minimum level 3 qualification relevant to caring for children and young people (NMS 18.5)
- take action to address any issues of concern that they identify or which are raised with them. (NMS 21.9)

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)*.