

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	06/03/2013
Inspector	Linda Christie
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Secure Unit

Date of last inspection	18/10/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The centre is registered as a children's home, operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure care and accommodation. Education is provided on site within a purpose-built facility. The centre is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 42 young people of either gender.

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 last inspection in October 2012, the overall effectiveness rating was judged as good.

Five recommendations for improvement were made at the last inspection. Three recommendations relate to the education provision and two of those will be reviewed when this is next inspected by Ofsted. Two recommendations relating to the care aspects of the service and one relating to young people moving to the learning centre were reviewed during this inspection.

At the last inspection a recommendation was made to improve the movement of young people to and from education and to minimise disruptions during lessons. These matters have been fully addressed. The responsibility for deciding when young people, from each residential group, move across to education is now made by the shift leader in each house unit. The centre's safeguarding manager, who takes on a duty management role, is only consulted if there is a concern regarding an individual

young person or a group. This has resulted in a much more seamless process in getting young people from their living units into classrooms within education.

Action taken to reduce disruption to lessons through young people being taken out for various medical or professional visits is now much better organised and controlled. Young people are much more able to concentrate on their lessons without people constantly going in and out of the classroom. There is an effective monitoring procedure in place, which includes recording if a disruption has occurred and any action taken to ensure that this does not reoccur.

The Registered Manager was asked to ensure that records of any sanctions applied to young people include a record of the young people's comments. This recommendation has not been met. There continue to be significant gaps in the sanction records where young people have not signed or included a comment. This shortfall is not being consistently highlighted by the managers who sign the records. For example the sanction records in one house unit had 12 recordings in the past month that had not been fully completed.

The Registered Manager was reminded of the requirement to submit six monthly monitoring reports to Ofsted. They were reminded that these reports should include an evaluative summary of the service, issues that have arisen, including any progress or development of services. The centre is progressing with this. A monitoring report of the period between October 2012 and March 2013 is currently being produced and it is intended to send this to Ofsted at the beginning of April 2013.

During the inspection, managers informed inspectors that they were investigating a complaint against a group of staff and detailed how they were dealing with this matter. The Registered Manager confirmed that consideration was given to informing Ofsted of this complaint, but felt that as no staff were suspended and there was no direct impact on young people she had decided notification was not required. Given the circumstances, the Registered Manager was reminded that Ofsted should have been made aware, as the organisation has a responsibility to inform the Department for Education of any matters that could cause concern if highlighted elsewhere. In all other respects notifications have been made in line with regulations and standards.

Since the last inspection, progress has been made in other areas that enhances the quality of care provided to young people and promotes positive outcomes. Young people have opportunities several times throughout the week to spend their break periods in the learning centre where they socialise with other young people in communal areas, such as the smoothie bar. It is anticipated that as the weather improves all the external areas can also be used for groups of young people, reducing the need for them to return to house units during the school day, except for lunch periods. This enables young people to enjoy a much more realistic experience of an education day and provides them with opportunities to get to know other young people.

Performance data is now more consistently being collated, showing that young people make excellent progress with their education while at the centre. For example

one young person who was at the centre for eight and a half months made gains in their reading levels of two years and nine months. Another young person who was in placement for ten weeks made improved reading levels by nine months. This reflects very positive use of the educational facilities at the centre, which enables young people to improve their basic reading and linguistic skills. They are well supported by teaching and care staff who understand the importance for young people of improving their educational abilities during the short periods in which they are in placement at the centre.

The centre was calm and well-ordered with young people relating positively to staff and each other. Young people were attending education and were involved in other activities. Several young people spoke positively about the progress they have made in education and particularly liked the vocational subjects, such as hair and beauty, which they feel will be helpful to them when choosing a career or further training. One young person said, 'I have learnt a lot about hair care and I am looking after mine much better, I think I might be interested in hairdressing as a career.'

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure where any sanctions are used, young people are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home. (NMS 3.18)

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*.