

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paul Scott
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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.

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**.

This interim inspection focuses on the progress made by the centre since the last full inspection in August 2013, at which the judgement for overall effectiveness was good. The home has shown capacity to improve and has demonstrated good progress in improving the quality of care and outcomes for young people.

Suitable action has been taken to address the requirement made at the previous inspection. The manager has devised and delivered a training programme to all regulation 33 visitors. This helps to ensure they are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have a detailed understanding of the secure setting. Reporting formats have been amended and provide visitors with a clear framework for their visit. The effectiveness of these changes is evident in the improved detail and quality of the reports, including representation of the views of young people, their families and other professionals. This increased rigour means that shortfalls are identified and suitable action can be taken to improve the quality of care for young people.

The three recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. Processes

for reporting significant events have been improved to ensure that when a serious incident occurs. Ofsted are now notified immediately and kept fully apprised of the incident to the point of conclusion. Three different electronic recording systems and a hardcopy paper system continue to be used by the centre. The manager is working with the organisations information technology department to develop a single system of electronic recording that meets the centres complex recording needs. Some good progress is already noted. For example, written records have been audited and a number of processes and formats have been amended. This has made it easier for staff to locate and access up-to-date information, evident throughout this inspection. A number of processes have been improved to ensure young people have the opportunity to communicate their views on all aspects of their care. For example, young people are routinely spoken to and have their views recorded following incidents of bullying, sanctions and separations. This ensures young people have the opportunity to reflect on incidents and raise issues of concern or complaint if they wish to do so. This also encourages them to reflect and learn from their experiences.

Young people spoke very positively about the centre. They say they have benefitted from their time at the centre because they have a better understanding of the challenges they face in life, including their offending and risk taking behaviour. For example, while proudly showing off her art work, one young person spoke about how she better understands why she gets angry. She says this has helped her better manage her behaviour and incidents of aggression have reduced.

A significant majority of young people feel that their progress in education is their biggest improvement. One young person said, 'I couldn't read when I came her. I can read now and I really enjoy it.' All young people leave the home with a number of academic and social accreditations. This improves their life prospects and future employment opportunities.

Young people are encouraged to develop their individual talents and skills. One young person has sold a painting after having it displayed in a local art gallery. A number of young people have recently won a competition run by the Office for X Police and Crime Commissioner. This piece of work is a good example of staff using young people's interests as a means to learning, in this case about the issues of bullying. The end result was a bullying campaign logo which is to be used as part of the county's police anti-bullying campaign.

Reorganisation of the way the units are managed has been further embedded into practice. Each unit now has a dedicated safeguarding manager who takes day-to-day responsibility for their unit. Staff speak positively about this move and feel an increased level of support as a result of this change. These managers take responsibility for all aspects of safeguarding practice within their respective units. For example, they will monitor and review incidents of physical intervention, bullying and separation. This ensures care practice is safe, fair and compliant with regulations and standards.

These changes have further strengthened and individualised safeguarding practice,

which is notably robust. For example, a number of restraints related safeguarding concerns, including allegations against staff, have arisen since the last inspection. All incidents have been rigorously reviewed, transparently reported and fully investigated in the best interest of young people. The centre strives to learn from these incidents and has established a service level agreement with an independent behaviour management provider, to undertake a quality assurance audit of all aspects of restraint practice and recording.

There is an increasingly positive approach to behaviour management. The use of sanctions has reduced as staff are increasingly focusing on acknowledging when young people are being well behaved. The generic incentive and rewards system has been replaced by a scheme that focuses on young people's individual needs and abilities. Linking closely to young people's individual behaviour support plans, behavioural targets are set. These targets are shared amongst the staff team ensuring they have realistic expectations of each young person. Red cards are issued for negative behaviour. These are frequently monitored and additional support provided for young people who may be struggling. Although still in its early form, the effectiveness of this positive approach is evident in the decrease in numbers of red cards and the increased number of achievement rewards which are celebrated in assembly.

A number of staff have been recruited since the last inspection. Records confirm that recruitment processes are rigorous. Young people participate in this process, interviewing all new staff. Young people clearly enjoy this responsibility and take their role seriously.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- further develop the systems for recording information on children's files to ensure staff are able to access information easily and quickly. (NMS 22.1)

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*.