

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27/03/2012
Inspector	Elaine Clare
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	25/11/2011
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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 service is a privately run children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for seven children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Progress

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

The last inspection of the home in November 2011 assessed the standard of care as being outstanding. At this interim inspection, the home is assessed as making good progress. The recommendation imposed following the last inspection has been addressed. All staff have undertaken training to enable them to offer the best support to young people while they are on family contact.

The service provides a home for young people with a diverse range of needs. The Statement of Purpose describes the home as a medium- to long-term provision. However, in reality all but one of the young people had moved on since the last inspection in November. There has been some new admissions and subsequent discharges or transfers and the service was very much providing a short-term placement. While this doesn't affect the outcome on any young person living there at the moment it could affect the stability of the home if new young people were coming in and out of the home continually. Since the previous inspection some young people have made successful transitions to supported living community placements. Others have been helped by staff to settle into the home following both planned and emergency placements. Young people like the home. They say 'it is the best care home I've been in and I am going to miss all the staff when I leave.'

Overall, the accommodation is of a good standard and provides a range of individual and communal facilities for young people to use. The home has one computer for the five young people currently living there to use and the home is registered for seven young people in total. All young people are in education and as such have homework and generally have a need to use an internet facility. The home does not have enough educational resources to meet their needs and they have to use the local library. This makes them not equal to many of their peers.

Behaviour is very well managed and staff keep young people safe. There have been eleven incidents of young people going missing this year, these have subsequently diminished to zero in March. Young people say 'we like it here, the staff are fair in the way they treat us.' Young people clearly understand the expectations of behaviour and mostly conform to these. Staff successfully de-escalate most conflict situations and there are no recorded incidents necessitating police involvement.

Staff help young people to reflect on their behaviour and develop positive ways of dealing with stressful situations. Physical restraint has not been necessary to protect young people from harm. The frequency of these incidents is diminishing significantly as the group becomes better established. Sanctions are not routinely used. When applied, they are effective at preventing repetitions of behaviour.

Young people make progress in all aspects of their development. They regularly attend education and vocational courses and are optimistic about the future. Staff maintain close communication with schools and colleges. Young people gain confidence and social skills through their participation in local activities. Staff promote age-appropriate opportunities for young people to practise and develop life skills, such as cooking their own meals and managing their own budgets. As a result, young people gradually become more confident and independent.

Monitoring processes are well-established. There is a desire within the senior management team to continually improve practice and drive standards forward. The views of young people are regularly sought and influence the decisions made.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- provide young people access to a range of educational resources to support their learning and ensure they have opportunities beyond the school day to engage in activities which further promotes their learning (NMS 8.2)
- improve the Statement of Purpose to detail what service the home provides. (NMS 13.1)