

Inspection report for children's home

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

Date of last inspection	13/09/2011
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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

The home is registered to accommodate three children or young people of either gender. Lengths of stay vary.

Progress

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

At the last full inspection, the home was judged as good. The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people. The home's Registered Manager provides good leadership and has a clear child-focussed management philosophy.

Children and young people benefit from consistent practice that allows their lives to improve. Placements are stable and children and young people learn to take responsibility for their behaviour. Referrals and introductions are carefully matched to staff's skills sets. There is good planning from the start of placements and this helps to secure positive outcomes. Challenges that are posed by the children and young people are responded to in full. Significant events are reported transparently and complaints when made are investigated. The children's guide, which includes complaints details, was updated between inspections.

Records provide a good overview of the work that is taking place at the home. Programmes run by key workers positively change children and young people's behaviours. Progress and achievements continue to be made in all aspects of their lives. Ongoing efforts are being made to capture the views of partners supporting placements. Some positive comments had been received between inspections from Independent Reviewing Officers. These included, 'It was really good to see how relaxed and happy the young person was in the home - I haven't seen him like this before.' Another comment, 'The young person has made some excellent progress since being placed at the home, she has responded well to the continuation of clear boundaries and routines.' Partners predominantly highlight good levels of satisfaction regarding the home's operation, management, children and young people's welfare and the response taken to health and safety.

There is good use of a range of monitoring activities and evaluation of data does improve the quality of care. Planning is founded on evidence that tackles key areas of weakness and builds on areas of strength. The home's aims and objectives are being fulfilled. The responsible organisation is planning to highlight successes, improvements and future planned developments within the next Regulation 34 report being drafted for the end of the present inspection year. The previous Regulation 34 report lacked clear evaluation. The home maintains a development plan. Internal quality assurance checks also support continuous improvements.

Managers stimulate the enthusiasm of staff and channel their efforts effectively. There are few behaviour management or safeguarding concerns. Children and young people receive a good standard of care from a small but experienced staff team. Staffing levels are maintained in accordance with risk assessments. It is a child-focused service that is conducive to children and young people developing their potential. There is suitable leadership and management oversight provided by the Registered Manager. Good information, including policy and procedural guidance, is available to support staff's practice. Staff meetings are being used to ensure all levels of staff fully comprehend the new inspection framework.

Children and young people work closely with staff; their views are consistently gathered and these influence the home's operation and future direction. There is a good ethos at the home that helps children and young people to achieve and develop. Relationships are good with individual differences being accepted and valued by all living and working at the home.

The promotion of children and young people's health and well-being is also good. The children and young people are aware of their health arrangements. There is access to specialist mental health assessments and support when required. Children and young people actively engage with their education and attendance and attainment is good. Children and young people's achievements improve self-confidence and future prospects. They regularly reflect on their progress with staff and this keeps them motivated. The responsible organisation is working with one placing authority to establish a pathway plan for one of the older residents. The present placement arrangements are not supported by a clear plan and defined timeline and this has a negative impact on everyone's ability to plan for the future.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home; specifically, provide good evaluation of the home's performance within Regulation 34 reports submitted to Ofsted (NMS 21.1)
- ensure the home contributes to the development of the pathway plan for eligible care leavers. (NMS 12.2)