

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC061232
Inspection date	17/01/2012
Inspector	Barbara Davies
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	15/06/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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.

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 home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by the local authority. The purpose and function of the home is to return young people to their parental home or to foster placements.

The home is purpose-built and located on a large estate surrounded by similar style family homes.

Progress

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

The last inspection of the home in June 2011 assessed the standard of care as being outstanding. In the interim period, the home is assessed as making good progress. All recommendations imposed following the last inspection have been addressed. Although regular timetabled professional supervision of staff is in its infancy, the training and developmental needs of staff are better recorded following each session to support the monitoring of staff training to ensure it enables them to consistently meet the needs of the young people being cared for. Additionally, improvements to the décor and the purchase of new furniture have improved the environment for young people. The guide for young people now describes the home more accurately as they have contributed to the contents.

The service provides a stable, settled, long-term home for young people with a diverse range of needs. Since the previous inspection some young people have made successful transitions to fostering or 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 the 'staff are kind and have really helped us to settle in.'

Overall, the accommodation is of a good standard and provides a range of individual and communal facilities for young people to use. Some parts of the home, such as the kitchen are in need of refurbishment. The home's action plan addresses these issues within timely and realistic timescales.

Behaviour is very well managed and staff keep young people safe. There are no incidents of young people going missing. 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 seldom any incidents necessitating police involvement. The occasional incident that has occurred has not been notified to Ofsted as required by regulations. To date, this has not had a detrimental impact on

young people as the home has worked successfully to sustain the placement and achieve a positive outcome.

Staff help young people to reflect on their behaviour and develop positive ways of dealing with stressful situations. Physical restraint has occasionally 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. This enables the prompt resolution of problems. Young people gain confidence and social skills through their participation in local activities, such as the youth club. 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. However, the current format used for external monitoring of the home inaccurately describes the service provision. It also does not involve a routine check of the records such as those of sanctions and physical restraint. Although presently not the case, serious shortfalls could potentially remain undetected for considerable periods of time. 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

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
28 (2001)	ensure information recorded on children's files is kept up to date (this refers specifically to maintaining, on children's files, the result of all reviews of Placement Plans and copies of e-mail correspondence relating to the young person) (Regulation 28 (1)(b))	29/02/2012
30 (2001)	ensure that Ofsted is informed of any serious incident necessitating calling the police to the home. (Regulation 30 (1) sch;5)	29/02/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that visits of the home carried out under Regulation 33 include relevant checks set out in regulations and guidance and checks of disciplinary measures and use of restraint and records of missing person's reports. Also ensure that reports accurately describe the service provision. (NMS 21.7)