

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Kevin Whatley
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Date of last inspection	21/12/2011
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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 is a children's home for up to six young people. It is operated by a private company that has a range of children's homes in the area and some linked educational provision. Currently it is accommodating children between the ages of eight and 12 years including some for whom future fostering placements are being worked towards.

Progress

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

At the last inspection which was carried out in December 2011 the home was judged as good overall. At this inspection the home was asked to for an application to be made for the manager to be registered with Ofsted. The home was also asked to ensure the routine monitoring of care practices in the home are completed. Both of these issues have been addressed and the home has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

Additionally the home was asked to consider five other issues, namely to review the levels and regularity of challenging behaviour, to add clearer details to the young person's guide in respect of sanctions, to make sure enough staff are employed by the service, to consider refurbishing the rear lounge and for staff to receive regular formal supervision. A majority of these considerations have been addressed. Four young people are currently accommodated in the home; all young people were attending school during the inspection.

Since the last inspection the manager in charge at that time has left the company. An experienced manager has been transferred to the home from another of the company's children's homes. An application for the current acting manager of the service to be registered with Ofsted has now been received. The application is currently under process and will be progressed in due course.

A suitable review of care provision under Regulation 34 was completed a short time after the last inspection. The report was comprehensive in its content and provided an assessment of care practices and interventions including reviewing and analysing restraints, missing persons protocols and outcomes and the general management of behaviour of young people and staff practice. Weekly monitoring of care is now completed more readily by the new acting manager.

The levels and regularity of incidents of challenging behaviour have decreased since the last inspection. A review of documentation confirmed that such behaviour was perpetrated predominantly by a single young person who has since left the home in

a reasonably planned manner involving all relevant agencies and that was clearly in their best interests. The atmosphere in the home has settled considerably since this time and, despite a number of continuing challenges, the general behaviour of young people is improving.

The manager and deputy accepted that the update required for the young person's guide in respect of sanctions had not been completed. A review of the sanctions' process showed that in general they are appropriately applied and were relevant to the incident or behaviour in question.

A tour of the building found that the rear lounge had yet to be refurbished. The management team felt this was understandable given the relatively short period of time since the last inspection. The acting manager said the room is due for refurbishment within the next week. The rest of the home was found to be in a generally good condition, although lacked some homely touches. A window had been recently damaged; the maintenance log confirmed it was imminently due for repair.

A number of new staff have been employed by the home and have recently begun working there. This has subsequently ensured a more permanent and consistent level of staffing which along with the new acting manager is creating a more unified staffing team overall. Staff noted that the team are now 'working together more' with the new acting manager showing good leadership and providing the home with 'direction'.

Staff now receive formal supervision on a regular basis. Records confirmed that all staff receive formal supervision at a minimum of once per month. Staff commented that such the process of routine supervision is now much more established and felt very well supported by the acting manager and her team.

It is clear the home have experienced a number of challenges since the last inspection, notably a change in acting manager, the recruitment of new staff and the particularly difficult behaviours of specific young people. The atmosphere found in the home was one of determination to improve standards across the board with the new acting manager and staff team showing commitment to ensure this happens.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the sanctions information in the children's guide is an accurate reflection of practice. (NMS 13.1)