

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC356565
Inspector	Mark Fitzgerald
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Millicent Delveria Vernon
Date of last inspection	04/06/2014

Inspection date	19/03/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

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The progress and experience of young people in the home since the last inspection is positive. Management oversight is effective. The Registered Manager is also the responsible individual and she is a significant driving force in the home. Her previous work experience and her high standards mean that management oversight is effective. Monthly visits and reports by an independent visitor to the home are in place.

The two statutory requirements arising from the previous inspection in June 2014 have both been met in full. The current level of staff training in first aid now enhances the safety of young people. Care planning is now good. Both residents have thorough and up-to-date care and placement plans.

The home is occupied to full capacity at the time of inspection, with both of the places filled. One young person has left the home since the last inspection in June 2014. The departure was planned and involved a move to independence arrangements for which the young person had been prepared. The young person's own self-care skills and his wish for independence meant that the placement had achieved the aims of the placement plan. The seven-month placement was successful in achieving a marked decline in the young person's offending behaviours. The decision to maintain only one young person in placement for four months since the last inspection was a deliberate one, based on particular needs and vulnerabilities at that time. The home looked after their remaining resident on his own until the arrival of another young person five weeks ago. The admission was planned.

The quality of care is good. The difference to one young person has been considerable. His placement has been successful in engaging him with health services to meet his individual needs. Dietary, dental and optical care have all enhanced the quality of his physical health. The relationships he has built with care and educational staff are now much more positive.

At the time of the inspection, one young person is missing from the home. Staff are following the missing from care procedures and working with police. Staff were able to contact the young person by telephone and he assured them that he was safe and well. The home offered to collect him, but this offer was declined. The Registered Manager is aware of the extra efforts required now to ensure that this one episode does not escalate. The home provides a homely, safe environment for young people. It is a three bedroomed house which is well decorated in a modern contemporary style, clean and very well maintained. Plans are at an early stage to extend the property to include a conservatory that would provide additional space as a games room.

One resident is engaged in part-time educational provision which is appropriate to his needs. The head teacher describes him as 'a totally different child' since he has been placed at the home. Previous aggressive behaviours have been replaced by a much more sociable attitude. He is active in planning his future and in the words of the headteacher has made, 'outstanding progress'. Staff have worked in partnership with youth justice services where young people have offending histories and court restrictions. Both young people have been nominated to receive awards next month at their local authority's event to celebrate the achievements of looked after children.

The most recent arrival has an appointment with a local school in the next week to make arrangements to admit him. In the interim he has been supported by his authority's corporate parenting and education team. These are positive developments as there was a poor record of attending education prior to this placement. Activities are for the most part physical and the exercise helps to improve the physical health and well-being of young people. A summer holiday abroad takes place each year and it is eagerly anticipated by the young people in placement.

Records of consequences demonstrate the manager's stated ethos of nurturing young people to allow them to achieve their full potential. Consequences have been recorded in response to positive, as well as negative, behaviours.

Fortnightly consultation meetings between staff and young people take place at weekends. The meetings are chaired by the manager and encourage young people to express their feelings about the care they receive. Topics covered include bullying, dietary needs, sexual health, activities, and education and house rules. Views are sought at these meetings and they receive an immediate response from the manager.

A small and stable staff team provides consistency of care for the residents. Both

young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other. Staff meetings are held on a monthly basis. The main subjects in these meetings are the progress made by young people and useful behaviour management strategies that can be employed by the staff team. All permanent staff are either qualified to the required level or are studying to become qualified. The only recommendation from the previous inspection not to be met concerns the behaviour management policy. The policy is in place and is being applied, but not all staff have signed to say that they have read, understood and agreed to implement the policy. Conversations with staff reveal that they are familiar with the policy and that this is merely an administrative oversight.

Staff turnover is low. Since the last inspection, one member of staff has left and one has been recruited in their place. The personnel record did not contain a record of the interview or the appropriate identity documents required. A requirement has been made to address this shortfall. Interviews take place later this month to fill a full-time senior staff vacancy.

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Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/06/2014	Full	adequate
13/01/2014	Interim	good progress
18/07/2013	Full	good
09/01/2013	Interim	good progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
26 (2001)	ensure that unless paragraph (6) applies, no person starts work at a children's home until such time as paragraph (3)(d) has been complied with in relation to him. (Regulation 26 (5)(b))	07/05/2015

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information 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 main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.