

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC359846
Inspection date	14/03/2013
Inspector	Philip Cass
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	17/08/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is one of a group of homes operated by the same organisation as part of a tendering contract with a local council. This home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

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.

Progress

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

At the last inspection in August 2012, the overall effectiveness rating for the home was judged to be good. The home was graded as outstanding in 'outcomes for young people', 'quality of care' and 'safety of young people'.

The home has not been able to maintain these very high standards. Consequently, the home has made inadequate progress since the last inspection.

Two requirements were made at the last inspection. These have both been addressed. Because the home's quality assurance systems are improved in relation to finance, the home now ensures that young people receive the correct allowances. Better monitoring of potential hazards in the home ensures that the risk of injury is reduced.

The risk of injury is further reduced because damaged roof tiles have been replaced. A new online reporting system improves the way that maintenance issues are reported and responded to. Damage is repaired promptly and some communal areas

have recently been refurbished and redecorated, leading to a more homely feel.

At the previous inspection, the home was asked to ensure that bank staff receive sufficient training to meet the needs of young people in their care. Progress has been made towards this objective because the home has now arranged a range of essential training. The on-going programme of training means that bank staff will be adequately trained by April 2013.

Placement stability remains a key strength of the home. The experienced and resilient staff group express a determination to 'not give up on young people'. As a result, young people are able to feel secure in their home and have the opportunity to build and sustain trusting relationships with staff. However, there is an increase in damaging, risk taking, and anti-social behaviour. Young people have been convicted of offences in the home and in the community. The home, while generally committed to avoiding the criminalisation of young people, has missed opportunities to use restorative justice approaches. As a result, angry outbursts and property damage in the home has resulted in criminal convictions. Because young people increase their criminal record during placement, they do not have improved life chances.

The home remains committed to promoting education and employment opportunities for young people. Where emotional and behavioural difficulties lead to the breakdown of school placements, the home works well with education agencies to identify and facilitate other opportunities. The home has offered apprenticeships for young people. Staff are hopeful that young people will take advantage of this opportunity. However, education attendance and achievement has significantly declined in recent months. Some young people now attend school infrequently. Strategies are developed with the objective of increasing school attendance. However, when these plans prove ineffective, they are not reviewed or amended. The reduction in school attendance means that young people are less likely to gain qualifications required to move into employment or further education.

Young people have reduced health outcomes. Where young people are resistant to eating a healthy, balanced diet, the home does not provide advice and support to promote healthy eating. Where young people refuse to attend the homes young person's meeting, their food preferences are not identified. Advice is not sought from health professionals when young people's diet places them at risk of ill health. Poor recording makes it very difficult for managers to monitor the suitability and nutritional value of food eaten by young people.

Young people are not sufficiently supported to make constructive use of their time. The home has well developed systems to engage young people in purposeful and rewarding leisure activities. However, these systems are not used effectively. For example, activity planners are not completed for any young people. Although young people make some suggestions for activities during their young people's meeting, these suggestions are not acted on. Because the home no longer identifies and promotes a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities, young people miss opportunities to develop talents, learn new skills, and develop increased self-esteem.

Managers express a commitment to continual improvement. Quality assurance and monitoring checks take place regularly. Where shortfalls are identified, these are responded to quickly. However, efforts to improve the quality of care provided are weakened by shortfalls in the home's development plan. The plan's objectives reflect minimum standards of care rather than developmental aspirations. Consequently, this document does not promote or evidence improvement.

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
18 (2001)	ensure that the routine of the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including regular attendance at school and participation in school activities (Regulation 18(1)(b))	24/04/2013
18 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in the home are encouraged to develop and pursue appropriate leisure interests. (Regulation 18 (2)(a))	24/04/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children's physical development needs are promoted in particular reference to diet and nutrition. (NMS 6.1)

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*.