

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	09/01/2012
Inspector	Maire Atherton
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/05/2011
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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 local authority children's home providing planned longer term placements, for a minimum of six months for up to six young people aged between 10 and 17 years of age, who may have a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The detached house is in a residential neighbourhood, within walking distance of the town and with access to public transport. There is a range of community facilities for education and leisure also within easy reach.

Progress

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

The overall effectiveness of this service was judged outstanding at the full inspection in May 2011. The staff team work effectively together to continue to provide a quality of care that achieves excellent outcomes for young people.

A significant strength of the home remains the strong relationships that exist between staff and young people. Staff are highly skilled at getting alongside young people and engaging with them positively. This provides young people with a secure base from which they can explore issues that are concerning them as well as providing them with opportunities for fun and laughter. The positive relationships also form the basis of effective behaviour management with an emphasis on rewards. Sanctions are fair and proportionate and young people describe them as, 'reasonable but irritating'. Physical intervention, which staff receive training in, is used rarely and there are minimal unauthorised absences. Notifications are now made to the regulator as required. Young people feel that their privacy is well observed and they know about and are comfortable with the audio monitor that is used on the upstairs landing. A policy and procedure on the use of this monitor has been developed since the last inspection in response to a recommendation made.

Young people talk positively about life in the home and say, 'I feel staff care for me'. Staff are committed to helping young people acquire and maintain skills and interests that promote and support their personal development. For example young people are members of local community leisure groups, receive individual academic tuition and entertain friends in the home. Since the last inspection the staff team have improved the opportunities for young people to develop their independence skills. For example, staff encourage increased levels of freedom that has enabled young people to progress from not being able to order food in a fast food restaurant on their own to going to choose and make purchases alone. Young people confirm that their views are actively sought about the running of the home and are looking forward to seeing changes in the décor in the living room.

There has been a small change to the staff team since the last inspection, with one departure and one new appointment. Two vacancies remain but these posts have been frozen pending the local authority spending review. The shortfall is made up by the deployment of a sessional member of staff who works regularly in the home and is well known to the young people, providing them with a consistent staff team. Sessional staff are given the same opportunities as permanent staff to attend training and are supported to attend all the mandatory courses.

There are effective systems in place for monitoring practice and recording, in house by the manager and externally through Regulation 33 visits. The manager undertakes monthly monitoring but there is no evidence of how this information is reviewed and evaluated so as to make further improvements.

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
34 (2001)	supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34 (2))	31/12/2012

Recommendations

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