

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC046524
Inspection date	02/03/2012
Inspector	Malcolm Stannard
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Secure Unit

Date of last inspection	02/08/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The centre is registered as a children's home, operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure care and accommodation. Education is provided on site within a school area equipped with purpose-built classrooms. The centre is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people of either gender.

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 2011, the overall effectiveness of the centre was judged to be good. At that inspection there was one requirement and three recommendations made. The registered persons have met two of the recommendations. However, this interim inspection finds inadequate progress has been made to address the requirement and one recommendation. In addition there is a further recommendation relating to submitting Regulation 34 reports to Ofsted.

Appropriate action has been taken to address two of the recommendations. Young people now receive much better feedback in response to any issues they raise in the community meetings. The manager and staff discuss young people's issues during staff meetings to agree a consistent response. Young people are formally informed of the outcomes at the next community meeting and minutes include this detail. This ensures that young people are able to contribute to the day-to-day running of the unit. As a result, they feel their suggestions are considered and valued.

The structure and organisation of life skills and preparation for independence work carried out with young people have improved. Young people are individually assessed and a plan is then formulated of the sessions and learning which will be most beneficial to them. Key workers take responsibility for ensuring young people complete life skills work, in addition to keeping accurate records of sessions. Young people’s plans and progress are regularly reviewed through satisfactory monitoring practices. Practice is accountable and overall life skills work and preparing young people for independence are much improved.

The staff team do not receive consistent formal supervision. While there have been some very recent improvements in frequency, records show shortfalls; for example, over a two month period one staff team did not receive over half of the planned meetings. These arrangements do not ensure staff are sufficiently guided and supported to effectively undertake their duties.

There has been no progress in addressing the permanency of teaching staff. There are two permanent staff employed who are presently on approved absence from the unit and all education provision is currently provided by temporary, agency or seconded staff. The manager stated that recruitment had been restricted until the completion of the unit’s recent contracting process. Formal education is provided five days per week for a total of thirty hours. However, the temporary basis of the teaching team impacts on the opportunity to achieve consistency in young people’s attainment and achievements.

No Regulation 34 reports detailing development and progress at the unit have been received by Ofsted. A manager at the unit explained that while all required data is available, work is currently been undertaken to combine this into one report format. A new recommendation is made in this respect.

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
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate supervision. (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	04/06/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the overall number, competence and deployment of staff, specifically those employed to provide education, can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of all the children resident in the home (NMS 17.1)
- ensure that summary reports of Regulation 34 monitoring are sent to Ofsted every six months and within 28 days of completion. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)

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)*.