

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC439535
Inspection date	23/01/2013
Inspector	Ann-Marie Born
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	18/05/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 children's home is provided by a private company and cares for up to five young people of either gender. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional and 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 **satisfactory progress**.

This home was judged as adequate at the previous full inspection in May 2012. Following this interim inspection this home is judged to be making satisfactory progress. The home has addressed the shortfalls outlined in the previous two requirements and four recommendations therefore demonstrating their capacity to improve. This inspection identifies further recommendations relating to continuity of staffing and consistent deployment of staff to further improve attachments and outcomes for young people.

Young people continue to thrive in this home despite a number of staff changes since the last inspection. Young people's attendance and achievement at school remains high and they all engage in positive, inclusive activities of their choice within the community. This builds young people's self-esteem, expands their horizons and encourages them to higher their aspirations. Young people report that they have positive relationships with staff and they feel settled in the home. One young person said, 'it is really good here and I can't think of anything bad to say about any of the staff.'

However, in order to ensure there were sufficient suitably competent and experienced staff to meet their needs, on occasion young people have been cared for by high numbers of agency workers or staff from other homes within the company. The manager and company are aware of the potential this inconsistent staffing could have on young people's ability to form positive attachments. They have taken proactive steps to address continuity of staffing and deployment of staff members to ensure young people's individual needs are met. These include employing a full complement of permanent staff members and deploying senior members of staff from within the company to systematically support new staff during their induction period. A comprehensive action plan, audited as part of the internal monitoring process, identifies clear steps and time limits to achieve these outcomes to enhance young people's safety, well-being, sense of belonging and consistency of care.

Young people are cared for by staff who are either trained, or undergoing training, to meet their needs. Staff report positively about the company's training programme and the support they receive to gain further skills that benefit young people. For example, accessing a resource centre both for specialist training and to obtain materials specifically geared to young people's individual interests and requirements. This enhances young people's quality of care and improves the potential for their outcomes to improve.

Strong, much improved, care and placement plans fully inform young people's day-to-day care. They are complemented by 'monthly progression sheets' and effective key work sessions. Consequently, young people are empowered to confidently express their wishes and feelings for their futures and they develop the ability to reflect on their progress and achievements. A young person stated, 'I am allowed to be myself here.'

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 overall number, competence and deployment of staff and number and deployment of staff, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of all children resident in the home (NMS 17.1)
- ensure that every effort to achieve continuity of staffing is implemented so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted. No more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night, at the home are to be from an external agency, and no member of staff from an external agency is to be alone on duty at night in the home. (NMS 17.8)

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*.