

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	24/07/2013
Inspector	Stephen Halliley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	25/04/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and will provide placements for single sex occupancy only.

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 last inspected by Ofsted in April 2013 and was judged to be providing an adequate service. There were 10 requirements and three recommendations made at that inspection. Since this time the Registered Manager and staff team have addressed all the requirements and all but one of the recommendations. Outcomes for young people have improved, especially in terms of education, which had some major shortfalls at the last inspection. The quality of care provided and safeguarding of young people remain good although there are some issues to be addressed in these areas. The progress made by the home is testament to the hard work of the management team and the leadership they have shown in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection.

The home has reviewed and updated its Statement of Purpose, which now fully reflects the new organisational structure and will provide clear information to parents or placing authorities looking to place young people in this home. The children's guide has been similarly updated and now gives a very clear view to young people of

the aims and objectives of the home.

The home holds current, signed placement plans for all young people currently living there. This ensures staff are aware of targets set and the individual needs of young people so consistent, individualised care can be provided to meet each young person's needs.

The most significant improvements have been made around ensuring young people access appropriate educational facilities to meet individual need. Three young people continue to be educated in either mainstream school or a local authority special school. The two young people educated on site benefit from a school which has had significant financial investment made in it. This includes the appointment of a headteacher with many years of experience, and a director of education. They have equipped the classroom with interactive whiteboards and begun to use a thematically based curriculum. This approach ensures young people are interested and engaged in the lessons they receive. Attendance levels this last half term have been 95% and above, which is a huge improvement on previous attendance levels. Staff comment on 'how good it is to see the boys engaged and happy to be learning', and about the reading progress made by one young person and the positive attitude to learning of the other. Plans are in place for GCSE examinations to be taken next year, showing the clear benefit of attending the right educational setting.

The organisation has shown further significant financial investment in this home in a number of ways. There are clear plans to develop the building to provide higher quality sleep-in accommodation for staff. All bedrooms are being redecorated and a new school building has been purchased and is currently being refurbished. This investment will allow the home to achieve the aims and objectives set out in its Statement of Purpose.

A system of health and safety checks is in place and this has been strengthened by the recent testing of electrical appliances. This has been scheduled to be done again in 12 months' time. This will help ensure all parts of the home are free from hazards to young people's safety. There are some gaps in the recording of weekly fire alarm and emergency lighting tests, and the periodic servicing of the emergency lighting system was considerably overdue. These issues had been picked up in managers' monitoring and raised with staff but there has not been significantly robust follow-up on this to ensure remedial action has taken place. While checks have been carried out since those which were missed, there was the potential for significantly increased risk to young people if an emergency situation had arisen.

The decoration and maintenance of the home are generally very good, with thoughtful use of colours and photographs of young people together with displays of their art work. There are, however, some maintenance issues which need to be addressed, including a broken toilet seat and a door handle missing from the community room.

There has been much discussion among staff as to when certain incidents trigger the need to notify Ofsted in line with regulations. All staff are now very clear on this and

this has helped ensure notifications are made without delay. However, greater understanding of the system needs to be in place to ensure staff know what to do should issues arise at weekends when the head of care may not be on duty.

Systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided by the home have been improved and now clearly involve young people, their parents and placing authorities through a newly developed feedback questionnaire and telephone calls. This ensures that the home receives a well-rounded overview from all stakeholders to help them assess the work they are doing and how they are meeting the needs of young people. The external visitor monitors the home every month and provides a report which the home uses to inform their practice. He has also made himself available to young people as an independent advocate, ensuring young people are able to talk to someone who is not directly linked to the home if they have concerns or issues they wish to raise.

Behaviour management is a strength of this home, and the use of sanctions or restraint is very low. All incidents are well recorded and young people sign all entries to show they have discussed the use of the sanction or restraint with staff. They are also encouraged to make comments if they wish to do so. This ensures young people understand why sanctions and restraints were used and helps them consider different ways to manage their behaviours in the future.

New staff are subjected to a stringent vetting procedure before starting work in the home. Verbal confirmation of references for a recent starter has not yet been fully followed through. A recommendation in this respect was made at the previous inspection and this recommendation will remain in place.

Young people say they are happy in this home, that they are well looked after and that they are kept safe. Safeguarding measures are good and night-time measures are being strengthened following a recent incident. This includes staff working later at night to ensure young people are settled, the use of waking night staff, if deemed appropriate, and the fitting of an alarm system to bedroom doors. This is designed to alert staff should young people attempt to leave the home overnight.

Discrepancies were noted in the stock levels of some medications, which had been picked up during monitoring but not completely rectified or explained. Additionally, one young person was given medication on one day which was not properly recorded. While records show clearly the medication was given, this does not include the amount. This entry should be in the home's medication recording sheets but is missing. Again this had been picked up, but robust enough remedial action to correct the records had not been carried out.

Although there are areas in which further improvement can be made, this home has made significant strides since its last inspection. Aside from addressing all the requirements, there has been significant investment in furniture for bedrooms, the purchasing of numerous outdoor games kits to increase the physical activities which are available to young people, and a holiday to Brighton is planned. The home has also forged close links with a disabled athlete who has done lots of sports-based

work with young people. This has helped young people maintain their physical health through taking part in a range of new sports. More importantly, it has helped young people address their prejudices and preconceptions about disabled people. This is a significant step in their emotional and social maturity. This provides further evidence of the improvements in positive outcomes being achieved by young people.

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
21 (2001)	ensure that a written record is kept of the administration of any medicine to any child (Regulation 21 (2) (c))	31/08/2013
32 (2001)	ensure that the registered person, after consultation with the fire and rescue authority, takes adequate precautions against the risk of fire; specifically the frequency of fire systems checks and servicing of the systems in place. (Regulation 32 (1) (a))	31/08/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home maintains a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated; this is specifically with regard to missing door handles and broken toilet seats (NMS 10.3)
- make telephone enquiries as well as obtaining written references for staff applying to work in the home (NMS 16.1)
- ensure the registered provider takes action to address any issues of concern that they identify or which are raised with them (NMS 21.9)
- ensure the registered person has a system in place to notify within 24 hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30. The system shall include what to do where notifiable events arise at weekends. (NMS 24.1)

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*.