

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035500
Inspection date	05/03/2014
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Secure Unit

Date of last inspection	17/09/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The unit is registered as a secure children's home, operated by the local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure care and accommodation. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities. The unit provides secure accommodation for up to 24 young people.

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 **good progress**.

The unit has made good progress since the last full inspection in September 2013. One recommendation was made on that occasion regarding ensuring that visitors do not bring prohibited items of contraband onto the unit, namely, 'chewing gum'; this has been fully addressed. On entry to the unit visitors now have to sign a 'security declaration' that they understand the rules regarding banned items before they are admitted. No further breaches have been identified since this time with staff displaying high levels of vigilance during the process of entering the unit. Two further recommendations were made relating to the provision of education; these will be fully assessed by HMI at the next inspection.

The unit ensure that the risk taking behaviours of young people are robustly and sensitively addressed. On-site medical and psychological support is readily available which enables young people to receive specific and timely interventions. This has been further improved with the introduction of 'out of hours' nursing cover to ensure initial screening health assessments are completed at the point of admission. This ensures that any issues are identified swiftly, such as the effects of substance misuse

or problems associated with poor mental health. Staff are well guided to provide consistent care, support and intervention that culminates in a holistic approach to meeting welfare needs. As a result young people with entrenched patterns of negative behaviour, including self-harm, are assisted to remain safe and considerably reduce their potentially harmful actions. Young people say that such, 'firm' and, 'consistent boundaries' have helped them make, 'really good progress'.

Safeguarding young people remains a high priority in the unit. Strong links between the unit, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Local Area Designated Officer enables child protection matters to be considered appropriately and in a timely manner. Approaches to the use of restraint ensure that they are only used when absolutely necessary. Each incident is fully reviewed with a vast majority of physical interventions being implemented to protect young people from harming themselves or each other. A majority of restraints are completed within two minutes with few injuries caused to young people or staff. A parent recently commented, via the unit's own questionnaire, that, '...staff are looking after my son 100%...my son feels safe here, and likes this unit'.

Young people continue to benefit from living in an environment that is well maintained and secure. An on-going maintenance programme has included the redecoration of most areas which has resulted in a brighter and fresher appearance throughout. There was little or no graffiti in evidence with young people appearing to respect their surroundings.

The unit continues to be run extremely effectively and efficiently by a management team who display appropriate aspirations to raise standards wherever possible. Since the last inspection a considerable number of improvements have been implemented. Developments include young people requesting to have and design their own school uniform and logo. This was agreed with the uniform being purchased last month. Young people were clearly proud of their efforts and had wholeheartedly moved toward wearing the uniform during the hours of education without much resistance. Such a move confirms young people are listened to, has helped to further enhance the structures and routines of the school day and reaffirmed the importance of learning. The unit has set up a careers advice centre, allocated a senior member of staff to facilitate the service and installed relevant data programmes and resources. This has resulted in all young people being provided with 1:1 time aimed at addressing their future education, training and employment wishes and needs. Although in its infancy this approach has already assisted young people to obtain work experience and employment in the local community as part of their planned mobility and resettlement plans; indeed the number of mobility's being undertaken has increased significantly. The new life-skills lodge has been well used with a number of young people having successfully completed overnight stays as part of their independence training prior to their release. This valuable resource allows young people an excellent opportunity to prepare for life back in their communities.

The atmosphere within the unit appeared calm and settled with young people and staff sharing positive relationships. Staff clearly appreciate the particular needs of

young people and were seen to enforce appropriate boundaries in a firm, responsive and respectful manner.

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*.