

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27/03/2014
Inspector	Rosemary Chapman
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/11/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home, which is owned by a private company, is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Education is provided 365 days a year, both on site and through camps and outdoor activities.

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**.

This home was last inspected in November 2013 when the overall judgement was outstanding. One recommendation to improve practice was made as a result of that inspection. This inspection judges that the home has made good progress since that time.

The recommendation related to staff accessing training in gang cultures. All staff have successfully completed this training, thereby improving their knowledge so that they can provide more effective support to young people with these affiliations. One staff member commented that the training was 'brilliant'.

The manager is passionate about the service the home provides and is ambitious for continual improvement. One staff member commented, 'we are improving all the time.' The manager is able to demonstrate improvements over the last four months, all of which have a positive impact on young people's outcomes. There has been a significant commitment to support the education provision within the home. The virtual head teacher from the local authority has given assistance to help improve the

individual education plans. Additionally, the psychologist now meets with the manager and teacher on a regular basis so that both receive first-hand information about the best ways of supporting the young people.

Other developments are in relation to internal monitoring. The manager's regular checks have been improved so that they are now extremely comprehensive and give a good basis on which to evaluate the progress of the young people and how to develop further. The manager has also improved communication with parents by sending them her email address so they can contact her directly if they have any issues to raise. The staff have increased the emphasis on smoking cessation, and there is a significant amount of information readily available to assist young people with this.

The manager has also improved young people's meetings by posting a blank agenda on the wall of the communal area so they can add anything they wish to discuss. Consultation with young people has therefore improved as a result of this. Young people consider their weekly meetings are an effective forum for raising issues, and the minutes demonstrate that young people's views are listened to and acted upon. The meetings are also a useful forum for acknowledging young people's achievements and rewarding their progress.

The service has access to a psychologist on a very regular basis, which is an invaluable resource for enabling the manager and staff to understand the reasons for a young person's presentation and the best strategies to use to assist their development. This has recently been increased following a request from the manager.

Young people have a clear understanding of the reasons for their placement at this home. They are fully involved in their care planning, and as a result, their engagement is more positive as they know what they need to achieve to move on with their lives. Care planning is thorough, and the files demonstrate that risk is comprehensively assessed and evaluated following any incident. All plans are regularly updated and therefore provide staff with clear and up-to-date information about the best way to support young people safely and consistently.

Young people make good progress as a result of living in this home. Prior to their admission, they have usually been in crisis and their school attendance has been minimal. All the young people are now attending school, either on-site or at a local mainstream school. For some, who have had very poor experiences of school, this is exceptional progress. Staff are particularly good at addressing these issues and gradually re-introducing young people back into education so it becomes a positive experience. One young person commented that they had 'changed a lot', and thought that was because of the structures, expectations and routines of the home, or in their words, 'because there are rules'.

The young people say they get on with each other and with the staff team, they feel safe and there is no bullying. Many of the young people have histories of running away from home or care. They all make good progress in this regard, and episodes

where young people go missing are significantly reduced. Young people are therefore safer as a result. They also develop more socially acceptable behaviour. One young person commented that staff had helped her understand the viewpoint of other people and as a result she had 'matured a lot'.

Young people develop their self-confidence as a result of the new experiences they have and the successes they achieve. There is an emphasis on outdoor activities, some of which young people have never undertaken, particularly those from inner-city areas. They fully engage in these, and the benefits in terms of both health and self-esteem are clearly evident.

Staff are extremely positive about the young people and very committed to ensuring they achieve the best outcomes. They are supported in this through regular supervision and access to good quality training. One staff member commented that both the owner and manager were very keen to promote staff development and that the managers are 'brilliant and supportive'.

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*.