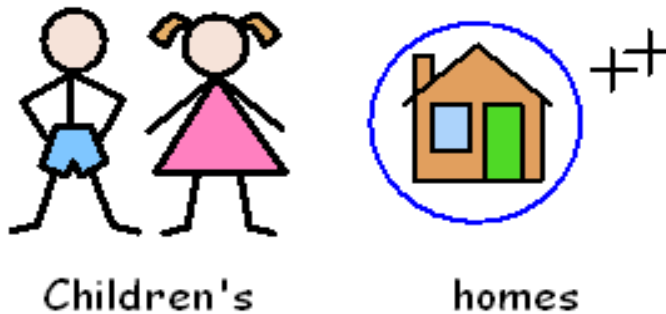


# Inspections of children's homes

Evaluation schedule and grade descriptors

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This evaluation schedule set out the areas that inspectors will evaluate when inspecting children's homes from April 2011. It should be read alongside the framework for the inspection of children's homes.



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**361**

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# Evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes

## Introduction

1. This guidance sets out the judgements that inspectors will make and report on when inspecting children's homes under Section 148 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.<sup>1</sup> It should be used to inspect children's homes registered by Ofsted under the Care Standards Act 2000 including:<sup>2</sup>
  - refuges under section 51 of the Children Act 1989<sup>3</sup>
  - short-break services
  - boarding schools and residential special schools registered as children's homes under section 1(6) of the Care Standards Act 2000.

## How the regulations and national minimum standards are used to inform inspection judgements

2. The evaluation schedule and the judgements made on inspection are underpinned by the regulations and the national minimum standards and are intended to test compliance and support improvement. Inspectors will evaluate the outcomes for children and young people.
3. Each national minimum standard is preceded by a statement of the outcome to be achieved by the children's homes provider. Providers will normally show they are meeting the headline statement of the outcome by following the standards that are detailed. However, these do not have to be followed exactly if the provider can demonstrate, and the inspector is satisfied, that the outcomes are being met in a different way. The exception is any requirement set out in regulations which must be met.
4. Any failures to meet a headline outcome from the national minimum standards or a regulation will be reported on at full and interim inspections. Inspectors will report on strengths and weaknesses throughout the report to illustrate how they have arrived at their judgement.
5. Any areas for improvement will directly link to the national minimum standards and the outcomes they are intended to achieve (recommendations) or relevant regulation or legislative requirement (requirements).

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<sup>1</sup> *The Education and Inspections Act 2006*; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/148](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/148).

<sup>2</sup> *The Care Standards Act 2000*; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/14/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/14/contents).

<sup>3</sup> *The Children Act 1989*; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/51](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/51).

## **Making judgements and using the grade descriptors**

6. Inspectors are required to weigh up the balance of evidence in a particular area and to consider it against the descriptors for outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate before making a judgement at a full inspection. Examples of practice may be used to support more than one judgement.
7. Professional judgement will be exercised to determine the importance of evidence in relation to the individual children's home. Judgements are not made on a formulaic approach but on a carefully balanced consideration of the impact on children and young people.
8. The descriptors are hierarchical; a good service should also meet the descriptors for a satisfactory service and so on.
9. Children's homes are expected to meet statutory requirements, in particular those in the regulations, and to take account of the national minimum standards and statutory guidance. However failure to meet all the requirements in full will not necessarily result in a judgement of inadequate. The seriousness of the failure and its potential impact on outcomes for children and young people is considered carefully to determine how it should impact on the overall judgement. Inspectors' professional judgement is used to weigh the impact of any breach against other aspects of the service.

## **Summary evaluation schedule criteria for the full inspection**

- Overall effectiveness
- Outcomes for children and young people
- Quality of care
- Safeguarding children and young people
- Leadership and management
- Equality and diversity

### **Overall effectiveness**

10. Inspectors will consider evidence and judgements from across the evaluation schedule before arriving at the overall effectiveness judgement, taking into account:
  - the effectiveness with which the home provides personalised, well planned care, taking full account of the individual needs of each child and young person, and promoting positive outcomes for all children and young people
  - the views of the children and young people about the quality of care in the home

- the quality of the relationships between staff and young people in the home
- whether children are safe and feel safe.

## Overall effectiveness: grade descriptors

<p><b>Outstanding</b></p>	<p>The overall effectiveness judgement is likely to be outstanding where the requirements for good are met or exceeded <b>and</b>:  All aspects of care planning and practice are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of each child and young person. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are exceptional. Children and young people’s needs and views are central to all aspects of how the home operates and develops practice. Children and young people have consistently positive views about the quality of their care in the home and their relationships with staff. Leaders and managers routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to the quality of care provided and improving outcomes for children and young people. They are ambitious and energetic for continuous improvement.</p>
<p><b>Good</b></p>	<p>The overall effectiveness judgement is likely to be good where the requirements of satisfactory are met or exceeded <b>and</b>:  Leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare and development, underpinned by effective support from staff to meet children’s individual needs. Staff in the home demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice to meet individual children’s needs.</p>
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p>	<p>The overall effectiveness judgement is likely to be satisfactory where the home provides a satisfactory quality of care, with individual plans for each child, and the quality of care promotes improved outcomes for children and young people. Most children and young people have positive views about the quality of their care in the home and their relationships with staff. Children are safe and feel safe. Any breaches of regulation have minimal impact on children and young people.</p>
<p><b>Inadequate</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be inadequate if the children’s home fails to meet the requirements for a satisfactory judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements and as a result the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded.</p>

## Outcomes for children and young people

11. In order to make their judgement inspectors will evaluate the outcomes achieved by children and young people, taking into account, where appropriate, their starting point at the time of placement, in the following areas:
- developing a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background and confidence in their skills
  - health (including physical, emotional, and psychological health)
  - attending school or other educational provision
  - achieving at school or other educational provision
  - making a positive contribution to their home and the wider community
  - benefiting from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them
  - being well prepared for a successful transition to independence and adult life.

## Outcomes for children and young people: grade descriptors

<b>Outstanding</b>	<p>The judgement is likely to be outstanding if all the requirements for a good judgement are met or exceeded <b>and</b> irrespective of disability, ethnicity, faith, gender, language, religious belief, or sexual orientation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ children and young people make exceptional progress to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background</li> <li>■ disabled children participate in a full range of opportunities and enjoy and achieve to their maximum potential, and make informed choices</li> <li>■ children and young people have exceptionally good attendance at school or other educational provision or make exceptional progress in that regard</li> <li>■ the educational achievement of children and young people is exceptional, taking into account both their attainment and their progress from their starting point at the time of placement</li> <li>■ the educational achievement of children and young people is at least comparable with their peers, or is making significant progress towards closing the gap</li> <li>■ most young people who have moved on from the home into adult life have made a successful transition to adulthood</li> <li>■ most young people who have moved on to adult life have sustained engagement in education, employment or training.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Good</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be good if all the requirements for a satisfactory judgement are met or exceeded <b>and</b> irrespective of disability, ethnicity, faith, gender, language, religious belief, or sexual orientation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ children and young people make good progress to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background</li> <li>■ children and young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and take responsibility for their own health</li> <li>■ children and young people have good attendance at school or other educational provision, or make good progress in that regard</li> <li>■ the educational achievement of children and young people is good, taking into account both their attainment and progress from their starting point at the time of placement</li> <li>■ children and young people are actively and positively involved in activities in the community</li> <li>■ children and young people are confident, as appropriate to their age, about their readiness for independence and adult life.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be satisfactory if, irrespective of disability, ethnicity, faith, gender, language, religious belief, or sexual orientation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ children and young people have or have made satisfactory progress to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background</li> <li>■ children and young people enjoy good health, including good physical, emotional and psychological health</li> <li>■ children and young people have satisfactory attendance at school or other educational provision, or make satisfactory progress in that regard</li> <li>■ the educational achievement of children and young people is satisfactory, taking into account both their attainment and progress from their starting point at the time of placement</li> <li>■ children and young people make a positive contribution to the home and have some positive engagement with the wider community</li> <li>■ children and young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them</li> <li>■ children and young people acquire practical and life skills to prepare them for adult life</li> <li>■ young people aged 16 and over are in education, employment, or training.</li> </ul>



<b>Inadequate</b>	<p>The judgement is likely to be inadequate if the children’s home fails to meet the requirements for a satisfactory judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements as a result of which the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded.</p>
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## Quality of care

12. In order to make their judgement inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- children and young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and with each other, and behave appropriately
- children and young people feel that their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and that they influence the running of the home
- staff help children to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases
- children understand how to make a complaint
- children and young people are cared for in line with their individual placement plan/short break care plan, and the contribution of the home to those plans is of high quality and involves children and young people and people who are significant to them
- the home provides a healthy environment where children and young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs
- staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievement of children and young people, engaging with their schools and successfully promoting their attendance
- a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities are available to children and young people
- needs relating to the child’s cultural background and personal identity (including disability, ethnicity, faith, gender, language, religious belief, and sexual orientation) are identified and positively addressed in both daily living and care planning
- the home is appropriately located, designed and maintained (including, in the case of a secure children’s home, providing appropriate security).

## Quality of care: grade descriptors

<p><b>Outstanding</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be outstanding if all the requirements for a good judgement are met or exceeded <b>and</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ staff have consistently high aspirations for all children and young people in the home</li> <li>■ staff consistently and effectively challenge barriers to the full participation of children and young people at school, in their community and wider society</li> <li>■ staff place the wellbeing of individual children and young people at the centre of their practice within the home irrespective of the challenges they present and their achievements are celebrated</li> <li>■ staff are proactive and imaginative in finding ways to support children and young people in making progress in every aspect of their lives</li> <li>■ children and young people are consistently and centrally involved in the planning and review of their care.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be good if all the requirements for a satisfactory judgement are met or exceeded <b>and</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ children and young people feel that staff are consistently concerned with their welfare</li> <li>■ staff implement positive behaviour strategies to support children and young people in developing skills in managing conflict and developing positive relationships irrespective of the barriers that they experience</li> <li>■ the views and wishes of children and young people have significantly influenced the running of the home and the delivery of care</li> <li>■ the home has taken account of and acted upon the lessons learnt from complaints from children and young people</li> <li>■ homes ensure that their contribution to individual placement plans/short-break care plans is tailored to the individual child, focused on clear measurable outcomes, and fully involve children and young people</li> <li>■ staff positively address challenges and barriers to educational progress and achievement</li> <li>■ equality and diversity issues are positively addressed in both daily living and care planning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be satisfactory if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ children and young people enjoy sound relationships and interact positively with others</li> <li>■ the behaviour of children and young people is generally appropriate</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are taken into account in the running of the home and they are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases</li> <li>■ children know how to make a complaint and feel able to do so</li> <li>■ children are cared for in line with their individual placement plan/short break care plan</li> <li>■ children and young people have access to the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs</li> <li>■ arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective</li> <li>■ staff actively promote the education of children and young people through attendance at school, support with homework and regular attendance at parents' evenings and so on</li> <li>■ staff support and encourage children and young people to engage in purposeful and enjoyable leisure activities</li> <li>■ staff are able to identify needs relating to the child's cultural background and personal identity (including disability, ethnicity, faith, gender, language, religious belief, and sexual orientation)</li> <li>■ the home is appropriately located, designed and maintained (including, in the case of a secure children's home, providing appropriate security).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inadequate</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be inadequate if the children's home fails to meet the requirements for a satisfactory judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements and as a result the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded.</p>

## Safeguarding children and young people

13. In order to make their judgement inspectors will evaluate the extent to which
- children and young people are safe and feel safe
  - children and young people feel protected and are protected from significant harm including neglect, abuse, exploitation, and accident
  - children and young people rarely go missing and if they do, they return quickly
  - children who do go missing are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return

- positive behaviour is promoted, and restraint is only used, if at all, in strict accordance with the legislative framework, including the accurate and clear recording of restraint and the reasons for its use
- staff and volunteers working with children in the home are carefully selected and vetted and there is monitoring of such people to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children
- investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for children, the person making the allegation, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation
- the environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the children and young people cared for
- children living in a secure children’s home or refuges experience positive support with their problems as well as security or refuge, and receive the same measures to safeguard and promote their rights and welfare as they should in other children’s homes (**secure children’s homes only**).

### Safeguarding children and young people: grade descriptors

<p><b>Outstanding</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be outstanding if all the requirements for a good judgement are met or exceeded <b>and</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ clear risk assessment and management protect children and young people while enabling them, as appropriate to their age, to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development</li> <li>■ proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that all children, including the most vulnerable children, have a strong sense of safety and well-being</li> <li>■ positive and proactive behaviour management strategies are consistently applied, and physical restraint is used, if at all, only in the most exceptional of circumstances.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be good if all the requirements for a satisfactory judgement are met or exceeded <b>and</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ care plans clearly identify risks and protective factors for individual children and young people; there are clear plans to address them, and these are regularly monitored and reviewed</li> <li>■ there is evidence that the frequency with which children and young people go missing is minimised and where applicable has reduced over time</li> <li>■ there is a strong, robust and proactive response to any incidence of bullying by all staff supported by leaders and managers; there is evidence that the incidence of bullying is minimised and where applicable has reduced over time</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ strong and proactive relationships with the police, where appropriate, support and promote the safety of children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be satisfactory if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ children and young people report that they generally feel safe in the home and outside it</li> <li>■ children and young people feel that they can identify an adult they would talk to if they felt unsafe</li> <li>■ staff recognise particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of children and young people, and take appropriate action to address them</li> <li>■ staff are aware of the factors that may trigger children going missing and take action to minimise the risk; the incidences of children missing from the home are minimised</li> <li>■ the home has clear practices, and agreed arrangements with the local police, which support effective action when children go missing and ensures that they are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return</li> <li>■ there is no or minimum use of physical restraint as a permissible form of control; any use of restraint is for the minimum period and uses the minimum force possible; any incident of restraint is sensitively and appropriately followed up in discussion and reflection with the child or young person concerned; and all incidents of restraint are accurately and clearly recorded</li> <li>■ managers monitor the use and incidence of restraint, and take appropriate action as a result of such monitoring to reduce its use wherever possible</li> <li>■ all staff and volunteers working with children in the home are carefully selected and vetted and there is monitoring of such people to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children</li> <li>■ investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for children, the person making the allegation, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation</li> <li>■ the environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the children and young people cared for</li> <li>■ children living in a secure children's home or refuges experience positive support with their problems as well as security or refuge, and receive the same measures to safeguard and promote their rights and welfare as they should in other children's homes (<b>secure children's homes only</b>).</li> </ul>

<b>Inadequate</b>	The judgement is likely to be inadequate if the children’s home fails to meet the requirements for a satisfactory judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements and as a result the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded.
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## Leadership and management

14. In order to make their judgment inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the home is effectively and efficiently managed
- the home can demonstrate capacity for continuing improvement, based on its track record, performance since its previous inspection, and evidence of the impact of improvements
- requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed
- the provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose
- children, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides
- the registered person actively and regularly monitors the quality of care provided, including consultation with children and young people about their welfare
- leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place
- the home is adequately resourced, indicating the financial viability of the provider
- the home employs a sufficient number of staff, who are appropriately trained and effectively supervised and supported
- staff receive high quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up-to-date with professional and legal developments
- volunteers are supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a high quality service to children
- records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child’s life
- all significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident.

### Leadership and management: grade descriptors

<b>Outstanding</b>	The leadership and management judgement is likely to be
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	<p>outstanding if all the requirements for a good judgement are met or exceeded <b>and</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ leaders and managers consistently communicate high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement</li> <li>■ leaders and managers stimulate the enthusiasm of staff and channel their efforts effectively</li> <li>■ leaders and managers routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to the quality of care provided and improving outcomes for children and young people</li> <li>■ planning is founded on robust evidence tackling key areas of weakness systematically and building on areas of strength</li> <li>■ targets for the development of the service are realistic and challenging.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good</b></p>	<p>The leadership and management judgement is likely to be good if all the requirements for a satisfactory judgement are met or exceeded <b>and</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ staff receive regular supervision of a good quality</li> <li>■ staff's individual training needs are identified and met</li> <li>■ the home can demonstrate capacity for continuing improvement, based on its track record, performance since its previous inspection, and evidence of the impact of improvements</li> <li>■ leaders and managers keep up to date with new legislation and practice developments and share with staff to improve the quality of service</li> <li>■ the leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place</li> <li>■ the home has a good relationship with the local community and neighbours</li> <li>■ recommendations from the previous inspection have been acted on.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be satisfactory if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ requirements from the previous inspection have been acted upon</li> <li>■ the statement of purpose is clear, accessible and comprehensive</li> <li>■ children, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides</li> <li>■ the provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ leaders and managers model a commitment to meeting the needs of all children and young people, including those relating to disability, ethnicity, faith, gender, language, religious belief, and sexual orientation</li> <li>■ there are records of regular visits under Regulation 33 of the Children’s Homes Regulations 2010, and there is evidence that children and young people are consulted during these visits</li> <li>■ the home is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the children and young people cared for</li> <li>■ managers ensure that health and safety requirements are met</li> <li>■ the home employs a sufficient number of staff who receive adequate support to enable them to meet the needs of children and young people</li> <li>■ staff receive sufficient training to enable them to provide good quality and safe care for children and young people</li> <li>■ if used, volunteers receive adequate support to enable them to meet the needs of children and young people</li> <li>■ records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child’s life</li> <li>■ leaders and managers have positive relationships with other agencies, including the police, health services, and placing local authorities</li> <li>■ all significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inadequate</b></p>	<p>The judgement is likely to be inadequate if the children’s home fails to meet the requirements for a satisfactory judgement and/or there are failures to comply with requirements and as a result the outcomes for children and young people looked after are inadequate or their welfare is not safeguarded.</p>

## Equality and diversity

15. Equality and diversity is a critical aspect across the evaluation schedule and will be reported on throughout the inspection report and taken into account across all judgement areas. Given the importance of this aspect of practice, inspectors will make a summary equality and diversity judgement.



## Fitness and conditions of registration

16. In addition to the areas above inspectors will consider whether:
- the registered persons remain fit for registration
  - the home is operating in accordance with any conditions placed on its registration.
17. Where inspectors identify concerns relating either to the registered person's 'fitness' or to whether the conditions of registration are being met, these will be reported. The Compliance, Investigation and Enforcement Team will be consulted as appropriate.

## Making judgements at the interim inspection

18. One inspection per year will be an interim inspection. This inspection will focus on progress in improving quality of care and outcomes for children and young people since the most recent full inspection. This will include consideration of progress made in addressing any requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. The judgement will be made on a three-point scale: good progress; satisfactory progress; or inadequate progress.
19. Inspectors will prioritise gathering the views and experience of children and young people as the basis for their inspection.
20. Inspectors can make requirements and/or recommendations at an interim inspection.

## Grading interim inspection findings

21. Inspectors will make their judgements using a three-point scale.

<b>Good progress</b>	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.
<b>Satisfactory progress</b>	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.
<b>Inadequate progress</b>	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.