

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	31/01/2012
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/10/2011
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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 (March 2011)*.

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority owned home provides care for up to seven children. The home can accommodate children with moderate to severe learning or physical disabilities.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **good** progress.

This home was judged to be good at the last inspection. Three requirements and four recommendations were made.

The system for recording restraint has been modified and now meets the regulations. Inappropriate reasons for restraint can no longer be recorded. There have been two restraints since the last inspection. Both records are appropriately recorded. Medication storage is now more secure. The keys are no longer kept with the cabinet. This means that there is a reduced potential for children to gain access to medication. The home ensures that all fire escapes are kept clear at all times. The manager has ensured that all escape routes are routinely checked and are free of debris and other slip hazards. The three requirements made at the last inspection have therefore been fully met.

The staff team have reviewed the use of symbols at mealtimes. Following consultation with children's key workers and an assessment of need, the home has removed these as they are neither needed nor used. This means that where symbols are used in the home, they are used for a purpose and based on the needs of children to support them through their daily routines and activities. This in turn has enabled the symbol environment to be much clearer and of greater benefit to the children. This recommendation is therefore met.

Although restraint occurs very rarely in the home, there are now improved systems in place to ensure that the views of children following restraint are recorded. Children are encouraged to display their feelings through the use of a symbol board and these views are recorded on the records kept by the home. The recommendation has been successfully addressed.

The home has improved its communication with educational providers. This means that all relevant matters are now shared between school and home. Children benefit from a staff team who are knowledgeable about their time spent in education. Continuity of care is provided at school by the care staff ensuring that information regarding health, well-being and general behaviour is passed to education staff. The recommendation made at the last inspection has therefore been met.

Training has been identified for those members of staff not qualified to the

appropriate level and will be shortly commencing. Although this is yet to start, the manager has clear plans in place to address the recommendation and funding has been made available to start the required training. The recommendation remains from the last inspection although it has been partly addressed.

There have been improvements to the quality of care since the last inspection. While not identified as a weakness at the last inspection, the organisation has redecorated and improved the flooring in the main kitchen. This means that the children benefit from a further improved area for them to develop their cooking and independence skills.

The manager continues to drive improvement in the home. Regular monitoring of all records ensures that the care is of a high standard. All requirements and the vast majority of recommendations have been fully met from the last inspection. The manager has clear plans in place to develop the staff team and continues to have positive relationships with children, parents, social workers and other relevant professionals. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Where children experience complexities with their health, the staff team are well trained and experienced in providing appropriate care and support. Children continue to receive an extremely high standard of care. Relationships between staff and children are exceptionally good and children enjoy spending time with staff. Children were observed to be happy, relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings at the home. Where children communicated with the inspector, they said they were happy at the home.

Children are cared for by a sensitive, caring and well motivated staff team. Children continue to benefit from access to a wide range of activities. The staff team are flexible and are committed to supporting trips and regular holidays for the children. This means that children experience a range of home and community based activities. Where the needs of children present barriers, for example, the use of transport, the staff team work hard to identify alternative methods. This ensures that all children are able to access age appropriate activities.

Incidents that occur in the home are sensitively and appropriately managed. The manager has an excellent awareness of the needs of the children and supports a staff team who are skilled in delivering individualised care to children with a wide range of needs. Incidents that require notification to external bodies, such as Ofsted, are not always swiftly reported. There have been occasions where there has been a delay in notifying the appropriate bodies. This has not impacted on the outcomes for children although a recommendation has been made.

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 all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that 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 includes what to do where notifiable event arises at weekends. (NMS 24.1)