

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15/02/2012
Inspector	Philip Cass
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	28/11/2011
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is run by a local authority and provides short breaks for five children with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and sensory impairment.

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.

At the last inspection in November 2011, the overall effectiveness rating for the home was judged to be good. The home has made good progress since the last inspection. The hard work and dedication of staff ensure that young people benefit from a service that has continued to improve.

Two requirements were made at the last inspection. These matters have been fully addressed. The registered persons were required to supply a copy of the Regulation 33 quality assurance report to Ofsted at least once a month. The organisation has quickly resolved the administrative oversight that led to the report not being sent. Because of the action taken, care quality and the safety of young people are more effectively monitored.

The registered persons were also required to establish and maintain a system for monitoring matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals. The home has developed a more rigorous system that enables management to identify areas of weakness and set targets to improve the home. Because the Regulation 34 audit has become more evaluative, it can now be used as a tool to promote improvement.

The commitment to continual improvement is further demonstrated by the home's development plan. This plan identifies specific tasks that will improve the home. Good progress is being made towards meeting the objectives of the development plan. The home has improved the way that it consults with young people and acts on suggestions made. As a result of feedback from young people, some bedrooms are being redecorated. A strength of the home is the way it responds when concerns are raised by young people or their parents. Quality of care is improved because the home makes changes quickly in response to feedback.

The home has effective accident and 'near miss' reporting systems. This means that potential hazards are identified and removed. Staff meetings are used to discuss strategies to improve monitoring of health and safety in the home. The improved use of body maps means that patterns of accidental injury are identified and action is taken to ensure that unnecessary risk is eliminated. In addition, the improved communication between the home, school, and families reduces incidents of unexplained injury.

The home builds and maintains strong relationships with families and schools. Young people are supported because staff and parents attend training together where young people have additional needs. A parent commented that she has benefitted from improved communication and strong working relationships. She said, 'we do everything together.'

The home is brightly decorated and well maintained. The provision of sensory toys, games, books, soft play facilities, and a sensory garden ensure that the home is well resourced to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties. However, the available games, books, and leisure facilities do not generally reflect the tastes and developmental needs of teenagers without learning difficulties. The home does not have sufficient facilities to ensure that teenagers without learning difficulties can fully develop their emotional, intellectual, social or creative skills.

The home has a children's guide that provides useful information to young people who stay at the home. The guide is available in 'Makaton'. Staff are proactive in ensuring that the contents of the guide are explained in a way that is accessible to all the young people. However, it lacks some key information in relation to how to find out about children's rights, how to contact Independent Reviewing Officers, how to make a complaint to Ofsted, and how to secure access to an independent advocate.

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 children develop their emotional, intellectual, social and creative skills through the stimulating environment created by the home. This relates particularly to children who do not have learning difficulties (NMS 7.1)

- ensure that the children's guide includes information on how children can find out about their rights, how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate. (NMS 13.5)

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)*.