

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Simon Morley
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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

The home is registered to provide accommodation and care for up to 12 children, boys and girls, between the ages of six and 17. Children who use the home generally stay there for 35 days per year. These days are spread over a number of short breaks at regular intervals through the year which provide parents and families with some respite care.

The home is designed and purpose built to provide care for children with a range of disabilities. It has specialised equipment, aids and adaptations to support children with physical disabilities. Part of the home is a designated self-help unit for older and more able young people to develop their life skills and support their transition to adulthood.

Progress

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

At the last full inspection in July 2011, the overall effectiveness of the home was judged to be satisfactory. The quality of care and the outcomes for children and young people have been maintained since then. The leadership and management arrangements have improved helping to ensure some progress has been made with all the statutory requirements and the recommendations from the last inspection. Not all the required improvements from the last inspection have been met in full. Four recommendations for future improvements have been made as a result of this inspection.

The registered provider had appointed a new manager to run the home. Adequate progress has been made by the manager to register with Ofsted. Line management arrangements of the home's manager have also improved since the last inspection. This has brought more experience and expertise in leading disability services to this home.

The admissions process has improved ensuring staff in the home have access to appropriate assessment and care planning information about individual children and young people. The availability of up-to-date information about individual needs helps ensure staff provide the necessary care to children and young people each time they come for a short break. However, care practice in the home still relies on a simplified in-house 'placement profile' which risks some of the needs of children and young people being overlooked. It is also not clear how specific detailed information in placement plans about children and young people's individual needs is used to inform day-to-day practice. For example, it was not clear if the role of care staff included providing intensive interaction for the benefit of children with autism during a short-

break stay. Such lack of clarity in the care role and short-break planning also risks some specific needs of children and young people being overlooked.

Staffing levels have increased both in the reduction of staff vacancies and an increase in staff working in the home at any one time. This helps both improve the quality of care and further ensures the needs of children and young people are met during their short breaks.

The new manager has ensured that parents and all appropriate agencies are informed of any significant events relating to the welfare of children and young people. This helps promote and protect the safety of children and young people. The new manager has also improved the effectiveness of the monitoring of the quality of care including better consultation with children, young people and their families. This helps identify ways in which the service can be improved. Though the management team have identified a number of areas for improvement, these have not been formalised into a written development plan with clear aims, objectives and timescales. This compromises the ability to ensure these improvements are implemented.

There is a better approach to managing the internal restrictions on normal movement around the home for children and young people. Some children and young people have restricted access to different parts of the home and some have more freedom. The reasons given for restrictions are to promote the safety of children and young people. Such decision-making processes are still not clearly recorded in individual children's and young people's care records. This risks unnecessarily limiting their freedom within the home.

Staff morale has improved and staff are receiving more training to improve their knowledge and skills. As a result, children and young people are looked after by staff more competent and able to meet their needs.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure staff meet all the individual needs of children as set out in the short-break placement plans (NMS 2.3)
- ensure the reasons for physical restrictions on normal movement within or from the home are agreed with parents, the placing authority and recorded in a child's short-break placement plan (NMS 10.4)
- ensure there is a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, identifying planned changes in the operation or resources of the home (NMS 15.1)
- ensure each child's short-break placement plan is monitored and the

requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child.
(NMS 25.2)