

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC409506
Inspection date	15/03/2012
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	05/12/2011
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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 home provides care and accommodation for seven children at any one time. Three beds are for long stay and four provide short breaks for children with a learning disability.

Progress

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

This home was judged to be good at the last inspection. Five requirements and one recommendation were made.

The Statement of Purpose has been updated and now includes the procedure for dealing with a child going missing from the home. However, the home uses electronic monitoring devices, specifically the use of bedroom door alarms. The Statement of Purpose does not include a description of any electronic means of surveillance of children used in the home. This requirement is therefore not met and is repeated.

The young people's guide now includes a summary of the complaints process, summarises the Statement of Purpose and contains contact details for Ofsted. The requirement from the last inspection has been met. The young people's guide does not include the contact details for the Children's Rights Director. A recommendation has been made.

There has been no change to the placement plans since the last inspection. Young people's morning routines are not effectively recorded in plans used by staff in the home. Therefore, placement plans are not fully individualised to meet the care needs of young people. The requirement set at the last inspection has therefore not been met and is repeated.

There has been a recorded error with medication since the last inspection. This meant that a young person had to receive medication outside of their normal routine. Staff have not received any training in medication since the last inspection. A monitoring system to assess staff competency is out of date. The majority of staff have not been assessed within the last 12 months. The home has arranged training in medication but this is not within the timescales given at the last inspection. Therefore, the requirement made at the last inspection has not been met and is repeated.

Regular visits continue to take place and support the home in identifying areas of development. The home receives a report after each visit. These reports are now

sent to Ofsted on a regular basis. The requirement made at the last inspection has been met. The recommendation made at the last inspection has also been met. Young people benefit from a range of methods used to ensure that their views and wishes are considered and acted upon. Young people are effectively supported with giving their views and staff ensure that they help young people to clearly understand where significant wishes are not acted upon. For example, they use symbols to explain that it is bedtime so playing outside cannot take place.

There have been four restraints since the last inspection. Reasons for restraint are clearly recorded and appropriate. However, the recording of restraints is not compliant with the regulations. There are missing signatures on these records. The outcomes for young people are not affected by this shortfall. However, a requirement has been made. In addition to this, there are records where there is no confirmation that either the young person or the member of staff has been spoken to about the use of the restraint. This means that young people are not given the opportunity to discuss their feelings or are effectively supported following incidents. A further requirement has therefore been made.

Sanctions are not used at the home and young people benefit from clear expectations and positive rewards for their behaviour. There has been one complaint and this was effectively and successfully handled. Young people are able to use a telephone and are provided with the relevant numbers for a range of support services. Young people are also supported in making contact with friends and family, where appropriate to do so. Parents are regularly consulted and communication is excellent between the home, school and family setting. A parent commented that the home, 'is friendly, it's like a family'.

Young people continue to make good progress. In some cases, there has been excellent progress in reducing challenging behaviour, better sleeping patterns and improving contact with parents and carers. Although the home has not met requirements from the last inspection, the outcomes for young people have not declined. A young person told the inspector that, 'All the staff are good, they all look after me.' There have been notable improvements in communicating with some young people. Staff have received guidance on the use of a new communication system. This has enabled young people to more clearly communicate their views, wishes and feelings.

Young people benefit from extensive grounds to play in. The needs of the young people are varied and complex. The outdoor environment has a wide range of adapted play equipment and is well used and enjoyed by the young people. However, there is a large metal hatch used to cover an unused outdoor paddling pool. This detracts from an otherwise homely environment. Similarly, an outside summer house is poorly decorated and not effectively used for the benefit of the young people. A recommendation has been made to further improve this area for the young people.

Young people are happy in their surroundings and enjoy staying at the home. Where young people access the home for longer stays, they are settled and relaxed in their

environment. The home is well decorated and comfortable, spacious and well equipped to meet the needs of young people. A new kitchen area has been completed and this enables young people to develop their independence skills. The kitchen is also specially adapted to meet the needs of the young people. This means that all young people can access this area and gain valuable skills. There is a focus on equality and this is promoted around the home. For example, young people are encouraged to respect themselves, each other and the environment. Young people are actively encouraged to take part in community events and all young people benefit from regular trips and outings.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	include in the Statement of Purpose all matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4 (1) Schedule 1)	12/04/2012
12 (2001)	keep under review and revise the placement plan as necessary. This specifically relates to the morning routines of young people (Regulation 12 (2))	12/04/2012
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, discipline or restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include - confirmation that the person authorised by the registered provider to make the record has spoken to the child concerned and the person using the measure about the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3) (h))	12/04/2012
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, discipline or restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include - the signature of the person authorised by the registered provider to make the record (Regulation 17B (3) (i))	12/04/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal with specific reference to medication training. (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	12/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is

well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting and risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel (NMS 10.3)

- ensure that the guide includes a summary of what the home sets out to do for children, how they can find out 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)