

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC048552
Inspection date	22/03/2012
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	16/11/2011
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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 is a secondary aged residential school for boys and girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is also registered as a children's home and is run by a private company. The children's home can accommodate up to 59 young people.

Progress

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

This service was judged to be outstanding at the last inspection in November 2011. No requirements or recommendations were made.

There have been noticeable improvements since the last inspection. The newly appointed manager is passionate about further improving the quality of care for young people in the home settings. Further additions to the care management team have further enhanced the monitoring of the service. This means that young people and staff benefit from a more accessible senior staff team. The recruitment process for new care staff has also been improved. Young people now play an active part in recruitment, offering their views about the suitability of potential staff. This in turn, informs the appointment of staff in the homes and further enhances the culture of involving young people.

The manager has reviewed many of the systems used in the home. Most notable is the change to care files. These are now clearly indexed and enable staff and young people to navigate these files more easily. This ensures that information is easily stored and quickly accessed. Key workers have been given more autonomy with regards to overseeing the care of their young people. The manager ensures all young people and key workers are given the monies up front for clothing, toiletries etc. This means that young people and staff can more easily purchase items without reference to senior staff. This has improved relationships between young people and their key staff. Furthermore, this has enabled young people to develop their budgeting skills.

The behaviour of young people is excellent. Warm and caring relationships between young people and staff ensure that all home settings enjoy high levels of mutual respect and tolerance. Where young people demonstrate challenging behaviour, this is sensitively and appropriately handled by well trained and experienced staff. However, there have been two occasions since the last inspection where inappropriate reasons for restraint have been recorded. These incidents did not lead to negative outcomes for young people. A requirement has been made.

All incidents involving young people are handled appropriately and recorded to a high

standard. The use of sanctions, where appropriate, are fair, consistent and in line with regulations. Young people are encouraged to develop positive behaviour and are rewarded for doing so. All home settings celebrate the achievements of young people.

Young people benefit from homely environments where they can relax and enjoy spending time with each other. All house units are appropriately maintained, secure and comfortable. There are noticeable differences between some houses with respect to personalisation of the communal living areas. Furthermore, items are being stored outside a young person's bedroom which means that an otherwise preventable hazard is affecting access to a living area. A recommendation has therefore been made.

Young people are actively involved in all aspects of their care. The views of young people are actively sought and acted upon. For example, a new catering manager at the school has devised an innovative tasting session for young people to help plan the school menu. In addition to informing the school menu, the results have been used to revise the menus for young people in the care setting. This means that young people have benefitted from choosing their meals in an accessible and enjoyable manner.

Excellent communication between the school setting and the care setting ensures that all relevant matters are shared appropriately. Young people make excellent progress with their education and are supported with their aspirations. Furthermore, young people are encouraged to develop their independence skills in line with their abilities and understanding. This ranges from helping to complete laundry tasks to travelling to college independently.

Complaints are rare and where they do occur, are handled quickly and to the satisfaction of the complainant. Young people are encouraged to either speak to staff or use a range of publicised support services. However, notice boards throughout the homes and the young person's guide do not include the correct telephone number for Ofsted or the contact details for the Children's Rights Director. A recommendation has therefore been made.

Young people benefit from a setting where they are active, encouraged to be healthy and enjoy making use of the wide range of activities on offer. Young people enjoy spending time in the large sports hall, playing outside, looking after the chickens and ducks, participating in art based activities, amongst others. The manager commented in relation to activities, 'there is always something, for somebody, somewhere.'

Young people have excellent relationships with each other and enjoy spending time in the extensive school grounds. A young person, when asked about the service, said 'it's mint.' Another young person said the service is 'really good.' Young people enjoy living at this setting and make excellent progress as a result.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that subject to paragraph (2) a measure of restraint may only be used on a child accommodated in a children's home for the purpose of preventing injury to any person (including the child who is being restrained) and preventing serious damage to the property of any person (including the child who is being restrained). (Regulation 17A (1) (a, b))	19/04/2012

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. 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)