

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27/03/2012
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	09/09/2011
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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 privately run home accommodates six young people of either sex aged between 12 years and 18-years-old. The home offers 24 hour care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities on the autistic spectrum.

Progress

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

This unannounced interim inspection focused on the progress made since the last key inspection in September 2011. At the previous inspection the home was judged as outstanding and one requirement was made which related to notifying Ofsted of each and every significant event listed in Schedule 5. The manager ensures that all such events are now notified to Ofsted. At the heart of this inspection are young people's experiences and outcomes. All of the young people are thriving and benefit from a well-trained and competent group of staff. Placing social workers refer to caring, polite, friendly, knowledgeable, professional and extremely helpful staff.

Staff benefit from a wealth of training and continuously use reflective practice. Staff changes are rare, with all staff including support staff, having worked at the home for a number of years. Such low staff turnover means that young people are able to receive continuity of support from people who they have developed strong relationships and emotional bonds with. Placing authorities refer to committed and caring staff that provide positive role models.

Staffing levels are good, ensuring that young people and staff have ample time to spend together enjoying active lifestyles, such as the charity staff and young people's football match. A favourite activity is challenging the staff on the games consoles. Young people also choose an activity each week to have 'one-to-one time' with staff. Young people enjoy at least two holidays a year and are looking forward to the imminent two week activity holiday in Cornwall.

Robust pre-admission processes ensure that young people's needs are clearly identified. A placement is not offered unless the manager is confident that the home can effectively meet prospective young people's needs. All young people are enrolled in some form of education and are progressing well. Young people are continuing to make strong progress in relation to their education and work, health, personal care, anger management and social skills. One placing authority described how in the few weeks that they have been at the home one young person's school attendance has increased by 75%. Staff monitor young people's progress and keep young people's targets and personal growth at the focus of what they do.

Parents and placing authorities are kept up to date on key events as appropriate. Young people say they are not concerned about bullying as there are no current incidents of bullying. When possible bullying situations have arisen in the past staff have responded robustly ensuring that young people feel safe and supported. Staff keep the group dynamics under constant review and bear this in mind when assessing prospective new young people. Staff provide positive role models from a wide variety of backgrounds and the staff team is well mixed in relation to gender.

Behaviour management is robust with few significant incidents occurring. Young people refer to staff helping them 'mature' and manage their feelings. This, young people highlight, has helped them deal with conflict in a more appropriate way and has had a positive impact in reducing their offending behaviour. Young people refer to staff who make a difference in their lives and are always there for them in times of personal crisis. Staff talk through issues with young people and take the time to listen to them. Key working sessions regularly take place around issues, such as personal relationships and education. These meetings provide valuable opportunities for young people to explore their feelings and goals. This has a positive impact on young people's social and emotional development.

Young people are able to maintain close relationships with family and friends. Young people are supported in developing skills for independence and have the opportunity to move on with outreach support operated by the organisation. Young people who have moved on continue to keep in touch and visit periodically. Staff ensure that young people are consulted on all aspects of their lives. The care and support provided is individualised and child-focused. Young people's meetings are an opportunity for young people to discuss and plan things. However, in reality young people raise any questions or issues as they arise, either individually or collectively and are able to receive a timely response from staff and management.

The building meets young people needs, providing a balance of personal and communal space. The building is undergoing major refurbishment and a loft extension. The safety of staff and young people is being maintained, for example, young people are going on a two week holiday whilst internal works take place. Young people are quite excited about how the home will look when it is finished and are keen to use a planned new games room.

The responsible individual has a clear vision on how they wish to develop further their services for young people, such as, the improvements to the building and moving towards a therapeutic style of unit. However, no formal review of the quality of care under Regulation 34 has taken place, the organisation therefore fails to evidence that it has a strategic overview of the service ensuring that all stakeholder views are ascertained.

Young people consistently rate the home as good to brilliant and rating the home as 8/10 with staff being scored 10/10. Young people say there is nothing bad about living at the home and would not change anything if they were manager. Young

people highlight how they feel really close to some staff. Young people feel well supported and say 'they have helped me a lot through my time of struggle'.

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
34 (2001)	develop a quality assurance system which is sufficiently robust, to fully review and develop the quality of care, and which, provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home. (Regulation 34)	30/04/2012

Recommendations

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