

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	30/01/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Michael McCleave
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Interim
<b>Provision subtype</b>	

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	27/09/2011
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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

<b>Good progress</b>	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.
<b>Satisfactory progress</b>	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.
<b>Inadequate progress</b>	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 home is part of a special school, which provides education and residential care for children with autism and complex learning difficulties. These include challenging behaviours. As an independent school providing over 295 days of residential care per year, the whole school is registered as a children's home.

The school offers residential provision on two sites for up to 30 children. One house at the school offers care for 52 weeks per year to 16 children. The other house is some distance away and provides care for up to 14 children from Monday to Friday during school term-time.

Each children's home is set within a local community. All have access to transport provided by the school as well as public transport, local shops and amenities.

### Progress

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

At the last inspection the service was judged as good. The home has made good progress in complying with the recommendations made at the last inspection. These related to staffing levels and access by parents and children to their records. The staffing levels are now adequate to ensure that safety and well-being of the children. Where vacancies occur, the use of agency staff and extra cover from existing staff mean that all shifts are appropriately covered. The manager has developed a communication tool using pictures and symbols to enable the children to be asked if they wish to see their records. In addition, all parents have been informed that they can access information about their children. This now promotes a more inclusive approach to information sharing.

The management structure at the home has improved following the major restructuring of the service. There is now a clearer line of accountability in place with the manager now being supported by two deputies and four senior practitioners. Staff feel positive about the support received from line managers and of their professional development. An area of concern relates to the sickness levels among some staff. This is being actively monitored by managers. Nevertheless, although the management team ensure that shifts are appropriately covered, this is generally through the use of agency workers. This approach does mean however that children do not always benefit from a consistent group of staff to care for them.

There is a culture of proactive engagement with children. This is aimed at supporting and encouraging them to achieve their best endeavours during their time at the home. All aspects of care planning is highly personalised so as to meet their individual care and social needs. All the children attend full-time school where they

are positively supported to achieve their potential. There is a good link between the school and the residential unit. However, some aspects of communication between the care staff and school could be improved to ensure a seamless service. There are occasions when decisions made at the school have not been conveyed to the residential care staff. This could impact on the care provided at the home. However this is recognised by the manager who is working on the communication with the school.

Safeguarding of children is taken seriously by staff who demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities. The children appear happy and settled in the home where they benefit from individual support and care. There is a relaxed atmosphere prevailing at the home and this encourages a bond of trust between the children and staff.

Staff work proactively to provide children with a safe and nurturing environment where they can develop self-confidence and achieve social skills. The culture is that of children, from whatever background, have the ability to achieve their potential. Staff work effectively as a team to ensure best possible outcomes for the children.