

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC048552
Inspection date	31/10/2012
Inspector	Julia Toller
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	10/05/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned residential special school, which is also registered as a children's home. It provides a service to 59 young people, between the ages of 11 and 17 years, who experience emotional or behavioural difficulties.

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.

Progress

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

At the previous full inspection this service was judged as adequate. Since then the service has made good progress. With the exception of one recommendation about access to social media, all requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection have been met.

The manager has now been successful in their application to Ofsted for the position of Registered Manager at the school. He is starting to have a positive impact on the service. Young people spoke about the manager in a positive way saying, 'you can tell he cares', and, 'this is the first year we have had a proper summer holiday it was great'. The Statement of Purpose now clearly outlines the independence system that the home operates called 'independent walking'. Young people were clear about what this means for them and their individual circumstances. They move freely around the various houses and the grounds. This was an area of improvement that young people identified, saying that the manager now approaches them to suggest they are ready for more independence. Whilst risk assessments are clear about how young people are safeguarded during 'free time', the practice of young people 'applying' for independence was discussed at length and this is an area for further

consideration and consultation with young people.

Although the manager has submitted reports in line with Regulation 34, they are not yet sufficiently evaluative to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the home and to plan action to improve the service for young people. The recommendation about young people's access to social media is not yet fully met. Although the home has developed a policy regarding this matter, it is restrictive to individual's needs and abilities as they grow up. It is acknowledged that some young people living at the home have high risk behaviours or backgrounds that may require such restrictions. However, risk assessments do not show whether individual risks in accessing social media are considered alongside their positive behaviours, age and understanding. Therefore the current policy does not adequately prepare young people for adult life.

Some significant progress has been made since the previous inspection. Notably the revision of consultation processes with young people. All young people, including those who use residential provision, are able to 'have their say' about their school. There are a variety of additional meetings that provide young people with a choice of forums where their voice can be heard. Young people speak highly of the school, they say that they, 'feel safe living here', 'staff are great', and, 'things are getting better'. More importantly young people say they know how to access the systems and are listened to; they do not always get the answer they want but are always given an explanation.

Young people reflect on their progress regularly with staff, which helps to keep them focused and look to the future with increased positivity. They say they can learn from their mistakes in a supportive environment, helping them to thrive emotionally and socially. They describe their incentive schemes, including travelling to mountain bike courses across the country. They have also used their incentive rewards as part payment for trips such as skiing and go on day trips out to theme parks and the cinema. This shows that young people understand positive behaviour and enjoy the rewards they have earned. Young people say that their recent summer holiday was a great improvement and success, this was something that they had not previously experienced and they hope will happen again!

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- encourage children to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up. Children are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe including outside the home and when using the internet or social media (NMS 4.4)
- ensure that Regulation 34 reports are completed at six monthly intervals, sent to Ofsted within 28 days of its completion and that they identify any trends and issues of concern arising from monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6 (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)

- ensure that the home implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment, in particular that risks are assessed on an individual basis with regard to independence and access to social media. (NMS 4.5)

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)*.