

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC048552
<b>Inspection date</b>	03/12/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynn O'Driscoll / Elaine Clare
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Interim
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	03/05/2013
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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 is registered to provide care and accommodation to 41 young people of both genders, between the ages of 11 and 17 years, who experience emotional or behavioural difficulties.

### 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.

## Progress

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

This home was judged to be adequate at the last full inspection on 3 May 2013 and three requirements and four recommendations were raised. The majority of these have not been satisfactorily addressed. Consequently, not all young people are assured of private telephone calls; restraint records are still not all sufficiently detailed to demonstrate safe and proportionate practices and, internal quality monitoring processes are not sufficiently robust. In particular, the previous manager had not evaluated staff recruitment files to demonstrate a safe and competent workforce at all times. To date there is also limited evidence of consultations with external stakeholders on the quality of care provided in the home to inform and continuously drive improvements.

Regulation 34 monthly monitoring of required documentation was not undertaken in October 2013 by the then acting manager. Monthly Regulation 33 reports on the quality of care provided in the home do not include the views of parents. Going forward the new manager has already produced new and more detailed monitoring

formats and additional Regulation 33 visits by an independent person are already planned to specifically explore any safeguarding concerns.

Over recent months some restraint records have not been recorded within 24 hours. This means the opportunity remained for additional text and comments to be added which may not fully reflect the accuracy of the actions taken, and any learning gained by the young person and the staff.

Since the last full inspection there have also been two investigation visits and three monitoring visits undertaken by Ofsted, resulting in three sets of compliance notices being served. These particularly relate to poor safeguarding, sanction and restraint practices and the sufficiency and competencies of the staff.

In response, the service has commissioned thorough independent investigations, some of which are still on-going, in respect of all recent safeguarding concerns. Those completed clearly identify lessons learned and actions taken to try to avoid any re-occurrences. For example, the need for more staff is clearly identified and more stringent recruitment and induction processes to ensure all staff have the skills and competencies required to safeguard and protect the welfare of all the young people accommodated. A suitable recruitment strategy is now underway to address these shortfalls.

The new designated child protection officers are all now suitably trained. The home's child protection and behaviour management policies have been reviewed and revised and discussed with staff. Positive changes include: ensuring health checks are undertaken within one hour of a restraint; and full and timely de-briefs always take place with young people and their views and opinions recorded. Staff have signed to say they have read the revised policies, fully understand the contents and will adhere to them.

Significant improvements have recently been made to strengthen the organisational structure. In particular, two weeks ago a very well qualified and experienced manager with a very good knowledge of the regulations and national minimum standards and a sound understanding of good child care practices, has been specifically employed to drive improvement. Her intention is to apply for registration to Ofsted. She is already actively involving staff and young people in the required improvements to generate a sense of empowerment and ownership, which was previously lacking. However, realistically the impact of her interventions is too soon to assess. She has produced a challenging eight week development plan. Examples include: more involvement of young people in negotiating the sanctions imposed; rigorous assessment processes to demonstrate that they can meet young people's unique needs and preferences prior to admission and therefore avoid unnecessary expulsions; and better systems to enable young people to report incidents of bullying.

More stringent fire safety precautions are now in place. Work is also on-going to ensure that all the young people benefit from regular and constructive contact arrangements.

There is a full acceptance within the new management structure that previously young people were restrained too frequently and the use of high intervention holds have now ceased. They are also exploring with staff more appropriate, safe and effective behaviour management strategies.

The new manager has undertaken an audit of all young people's files which clearly demonstrates that all the legally required documentation is not in place, or is significantly out of date. Requests have recently been sent to all placing authorities to update care plans over two years old. The service is also awaiting the vast majority of minutes of statutory reviews despite some of the meetings having taken place several months ago. These are vital documents to ensure that the staff are meeting the assessed needs and efficiently addressing any recommendations as identified and contracted to do so by the placing authorities.

Missing from home records are not satisfactorily maintained. Key information including the circumstances leading up to young people running away and the times they went missing and returned are not consistently detailed.

All staff have training planned in December 2013 and January 2014 about the importance of maintaining accurate and detailed records which will then be closely monitored by the new management team.

Not all of the staff have completed the qualifications required of their respective roles. Moreover, they have not all been receiving regular individual supervision sessions and annual appraisals. This means that their individual performances are not being closely monitored and their on-going training and development needs are not being formally explored. These processes are essential in ensuring that they have the skills and competencies to meet the unique and complex needs of all the young placed.

Some of the staff have told the new manager how vulnerable and unsupported they have felt for some time and say communication has previously been very poor. Comments from recent consultations undertaken by the new manager include, 'In five years I have had one appraisal', 'I have been working here for 10 years and have only had two appraisals and three supervisions and the training for night staff has only just been offered', and, 'The welfare/duty of care to staff has been poor/non-existent due to irregular and poor staff supervision.' Appropriate systems have recently been put in place to address these shortfalls, but the effectiveness is too soon to evaluate.

Staff confirm satisfaction with the basic mandatory training courses on offer, but have requested more specialist courses to better meet the specific and more complex needs of the young people. These views are fully acknowledged by the new manager and included in her development plan.

Key themes have emerged from recent consultations with young people and staff which are included in the current development plan. Consequently, they all feel much

more positive about the future. Examples include more or larger vehicles to enable access to a wider range of off-site activities and improvements to the accommodation. Young people are especially pleased that the use of smart phones is being considered. They say they like the healthy meals on offer, the opportunity to learn independence skills and are really excited about going on a ski trip in January. There are, however, stark differences of opinion about members of staff which will be explored as part of the on-going independent investigations and disciplinary hearings. This service is now very good at keeping Ofsted well informed of all significant events and regularly provides updates and outcomes.

This service has made inadequate progress since the last inspection given the number of regulatory shortfalls. However, appropriate plans are now in place and strong individuals in key positions to continue to drive the significant improvements that have already been made in recent weeks.

The new manager is currently reviewing all young people's current needs, identifying what additional support is needed and is making referrals to a range of relevant specialist services.

## 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.

<b>Reg.</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Due date</b>
15 (2001)	ensure that the young people accommodated in the home are provided at all reasonable times with access to a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private without reference to persons working in the home (Regulation 15(4)(a))	19/01/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any restraint a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which includes all the required particulars (Regulation 17(B))	17/12/2013
28 (2001)	ensure every child's file includes all the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 and they are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each written entry. (Regulation 28(1), Schedule 3(10)(16)(18) )	19/01/2014
25 (2001)	ensure at all times a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of all the children accommodated (Regulation 25(1)(a) and (b)) *	19/01/2014
27 (2001)	ensure all staff receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27(4)(a)) *	03/01/2014
34	maintain a system for monitoring all the matters set out in	03/01/2014

(2001)	Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals (Regulation 34(1)(a))	
33 (2001)	ensure Regulation 33 visits include interviews with young people's parents and relatives on the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33(4))	03/01/2014

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

### Recommendations

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

- demonstrate that the views of young people's families, social workers and independent reviewing officers are regularly sought on their care (NMS 1.4)
- demonstrate an effective system for ensuring that all unqualified staff are working towards the Children and Young People's workforce Diploma within six months of confirmation of employment (NMS 18.5)
- ensure satisfactory written records are kept by the home when a child goes missing. (NMS 5.10)

## 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*.