

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC032838
Inspection date	04/02/2014
Inspector	Gillian Walters
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	18/09/2013
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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 provides a service to eight children, between the ages of six and 12 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 last full inspection on 18 September 2013 this home was judged as good. There were two requirements and two recommendations made to promote improvement in the service. A further visit to the home on 13 November 2013 resulted in two more required improvements being identified. These have all been suitably addressed by the provider and further action taken to improve the quality of the service provided.

The home has very recently appointed a new manager to lead the home following the planned departure of the home's Registered Manager on maternity leave. Ofsted were advised of this recent appointment and the manager is currently in the process of making application to become the home's Registered Manager. The new manager has benefited from an extended induction period, working alongside the Registered Manager prior to her departure. This has enabled her to successfully establish positive relationships with both children and the staff team and familiarise herself with the home's operation. The manager commented, 'my induction has been second to none.'

The home's published children's guide has been revised to ensure that children have good access to information about the home's complaints procedure should they wish to raise any concerns. The home has also revised its statement of purpose to appropriately reflect arrangements for children who may go missing and the complaints process. It is in the process of further updating this document to reflect recent changes in staffing arrangements.

The home has revised and updated a number of its policies and procedures, including those relating to missing children and behaviour management to reflect recent legislative changes. Risk assessment and behaviour management plans have been reviewed and revised, identifying and suitably addressing children's specific needs. This ensures that children's needs are fully understood by staff and plans to support them are now robust.

Monitoring within the home is proving effective with information being successfully evaluated, identifying trends and patterns that inform improved strategies for managing individual children's behaviours. This has positively enabled staff to target difficult times of the day for individual children. A clear result of the progress made can be identified in the reduction of physical interventions for some children.

Improved arrangements are in place to ensure that children receive a health check immediately following any incident of physical intervention. This ensures that any concerns are picked up without delay and appropriately acted upon, including notification to Ofsted where this is required. Additionally, the provider has revised records in relation to the use of disciplinary measures. This ensures that there is sufficient opportunity to record full and comprehensive reflection from both children and staff following any event, enabling both staff and children to learn from events that occur. Formal staff supervision arrangements also routinely identify and address occasions when staff have been involved in physical intervention; this allows the manager to further evaluate and scrutinise practice to ensure it is proportionate and reasonable.

The staff benefit from their attendance at regular staff team meetings. This forum provides them with regular opportunities for peer support and time to discuss children's individual progress. The home values the importance of staff development and encourages staff to participate in a range of training to ensure that their knowledge and skills are continuously developed. Individual needs are usually identified through the process of supervision and appraisal. In addressing an identified shortfall, all staff members have recently participated in an event arranged to increase their awareness and understanding of safe practice in relation to supervising contact between children and their families.

Children report that they feel happy and safe in this home. They enjoy living in an environment that is homely and promotes emotional warmth. The staff demonstrate creativity in developing resources within the home to enable children to appropriately express their thoughts and feelings, often avoiding less desirable behaviours. Children also engage positively with regular children's meetings where they contribute their ideas and wishes, influencing some of the decisions concerning their

day-to-day living arrangements. A good example of this was the opportunity given to children to contribute their views concerning the potential appointment of new staff. Children understand that they can voice their preferences and that their views will be taken into account.

The home has made progress in eliciting and documenting the views of placing authorities to gauge the level of satisfaction with the service provided. However, the home's external monitoring arrangements fall short in ensuring that the views of children, staff and families are consistently sought. This means that independent monitoring is not routinely taking account of such views on children's safety and well-being that would assist in evaluating and determining the standard of care provided within this home.

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
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out the visit shall interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33(4)(a))	24/03/2014

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*.