

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Suzanne Hogben
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/12/2011
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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

The home, or the project as it is commonly known, is a short-break scheme offering respite care for children and young people with learning difficulties. Some have physical or multiple disabilities. The project currently provides for a total of 36 children, but accommodates no more than a maximum of four, exceptionally five, at any one time.

The home is operated by an independent provider in partnership with a local authority from whose area all the children and young people come.

Progress

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

At the last inspection in December 2011, the overall quality rating for the service was outstanding, with no recommendations set relating to further improvement.

Young people in this home receive an exceptionally-high quality of care, tailored to their individual needs. The short breaks offered to young people allow them to experience activities and develop life experiences. The needs of young people and their family remain the focus of care planning. As a result, young people feel happy staying at the home and their family know they are safe and well cared for. One young person commented, 'this week has gone so fast I just got here and it is time to come home again. It has been really great.' Staff work hard to ensure that young people are able to participate fully in their care when they stay at the home. Some of the young people have trouble in communicating their views but staff work hard to find ways to develop methods of communication. Staff are inventive and dedicated in their efforts to ensure full participation by young people, for example, through the use of pictures to choose and select activities.

At the last inspection, the Registered Manager was developing an improved parents' information leaflet and children's guide. This is now complete and involved consultation with the active parents group. The manager uses the parents group as a means of consultation. This group enables parents to participate in changes to the service. Working with families and the young people is a priority in this home. The manager commented in her action plan, 'Consultation and obtaining feedback from children and young people was also discussed as a priority for development next year.' Surveys help with the evaluation of the service and the manager sees it as a priority to improve the return rate of the surveys. The evaluation of the data by the manager enables her to, 'rate which aspects of the service work well and which less well.'

The manager has a development plan that is due for review at the end of April 2012.

In addition, the manager produces a quarterly report that identifies areas of good practice and develops plans to improve the service. At the previous inspection, staff were revising the document that went home with the young people after their stay. The new forms are now in use and include pictures of the young people during their activities. Staff view this as a positive move, believing that it helps parents to fully understand how their child really feels about the activities they are participating in. One member of staff commented, 'a picture tells them a whole lot more.' During the inspection, the young people were fully involved in photographing their activities and seemed pleased that this record of their achievement would be going home to their parents.

The staff team has recently undertaken three days of training that included fire evacuation training, manual handling and key worker training. Three members of staff have taken part in a participation seminar and used the information gained to develop ways of working in the home. This was a focus of the recent training. The manager believes the training helps staff to consider how they can improve outcomes for young people. The aim is to increase young people's involvement in their own care and activities both inside and outside the project. Staff are enthusiastic in their efforts to learn from this training and feel that the photographed activity sheets is an example of ongoing good practice.

There is a clear management overview and monitoring of the care provided in the home and the manager demonstrates capacity to improve by consultation and evaluation of the service. Young people experience a variety of activities, provided by dedicated and well-trained staff. As a result, young people are expanding their own skills and knowledge in a safe and nurturing environment.