

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025940
Inspection date	20/03/2012
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	29/06/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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

This home is run by a voluntary organisation. Its purpose is to provide long-term care and support for a maximum of four children or young people with severe learning or physical disabilities or both.

Progress

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

This unannounced interim inspection focused on the progress made since the last full inspection in June 2011 when the home was rated as good. At the previous inspection one requirement; to establish a system for reviewing the quality of care was set. The home has developed a system, however, this fails to have a full strategic overview of the service ensuring that the views of young people, their parents and placing authorities are ascertained. Two recommendations were set at the last inspection, these relate to the clarity of delegation of responsibility and the provision of training in the home. Staff are now clear as to their roles and responsibilities. The manager is seeking safeguarding training relating to the issues which particularly effect children with disabilities.

At the heart of this inspection are children and young people's experiences and outcomes. All of the children are thriving and benefit from a well-trained and competent group of staff. Staff benefit from training in key areas, such as safeguarding. The manager is continuing to seek specific training relating to safeguarding young people with disabilities. The care characteristics of young people mean that they have limited understanding of their world and the impact of any behaviours they display. Staff use their knowledge of the young people to avoid situations which are likely to trigger distress and if incidents occur staff use distraction techniques. When sanctions are applied these tend to be the removal of a television or return from an activity. Staff note that this is helping young people understand the concept of right and wrong. However, staff have not viewed this as a sanction, as such, and have therefore not recorded these as required. No copies of the current regulations and statutory guidance for children's homes are held on site, staff are therefore unable to refer to these. The home does provide care for young people over the age of 18 years old, but no risk assessment of the impact of this on other young people has been undertaken.

Staff changes are rare, with the majority of the staff having worked at the home for a number of years. The organisation ensures that checks on prospective staff's employment history, identity and any possible criminal history are undertaken. However, there is no evidence whether telephone calls are undertaken to verify the written references supplied for people wishing to work at the home.

Staff feel well supported by the management within the home and enjoy working in a setting which puts young people at the centre of everything they do. Low staff turnover means that young people are able to receive continuity of support from staff who they have developed strong relationships and emotional bonds with. Parents talk about a committed team of competent and caring staff 'who go the extra mile'.

Care is highly personalised and responsive to the young person's thoughts, wishes and feelings. For example, staff prepare four different evening meals because the young people each wanted different things to eat, this also ensures individual cultural and dietary needs are met. Children enjoy regular trips with staff to the local shops, park and theatres. One young person is to go on an outward bound weekend and have the opportunity to go caving with staff. This is an example of how the staff provide young people with opportunities to try new things and develop their skills by taking controlled risks similar to other young people of their age. The young person's parent emphasized that this was something they never thought would be the type of experience open to their child. Young people are supported to learn independence skills in areas such as self-care and household chores. Parents talked about their children's growth in confidence, communication and social skills since living at the home. Some young people who staff were told could not walk have become able to mobilise with staff support.

Managers maintain close links with schools, for example, home school link books are used on a daily basis ensuring everyone involved is up to speed with the child's day. Staff are clear of their role as advocate, for example raising concerns regarding educational transport with the local authority to ensure children arrive at school not unduly distressed. Staff continue to keep in touch with some of the young people who have moved on from the home. The planning of admissions to the home, is staff feel, an area of strength for the home. Staff visit the young people in a variety of environments and ensure they are able to meet the child's needs before offering a placement. Parents say they were really well supported by staff who were sensitive to both the child's and family's needs during the process.

Staff monitor young people's progress and keep parents and placing authorities up to date with how young people are doing. The care characteristics of young people mean that bullying as such does not occur and the group dynamics are kept under constant review. Young people are able to maintain close relationships with family and friends. All of the young people were able to spend time with their families over the Christmas period. For one young person and their family this was particularly special because staff had transported and stayed with them enabling their first family Christmas together in many years. Staff plan to enable this family to have their first family holiday in years by accompanying them to support and care for the young person.

The building meets young people's needs, providing a balance of personal and communal space. The building is homely and maintained in good order. Specialist equipment, such as, hoists and high low beds are provided. Cot sides are used for

some young people, however, the risk of a young person climbing over the cot side has not been assessed. Children enjoy playing on the specialist garden equipment in the summer and relaxing in the home's sensory room. Creative activities are regularly enjoyed and young people were in the process of making Easter masks.

Parents sum up their view of the service as excellent stating 'He is really happy and well cared for. I can't praise it enough, he has thrived in their care.'

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
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for reviewing the quality of care provided in the children's home which includes the views of young people and other key stakeholders (Regulation 34)	07/05/2012
35 (2001)	ensure copies of the current children's homes regulations, national minimum standards and statutory guidance are kept in the home and made available to staff, children and their parents (Regulation 35)	23/04/2012
17B (2001)	ensure an accurate record is maintained of all sanctions applied (Regulation 17(b))	23/04/2012

Recommendations

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

- evidence telephone enquiries are undertaken to verify written references (NMS 16.1)
- risk assess the provision of accommodation to people over the age of 18 in line with Ofsted guidance (NMS 4)
- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement are not used unless this is necessary to safeguard children. Risk is assessed and avoidable hazards are removed. In particular; risk assess the use of cot sides and, if appropriate to be used, ensure such measures are agreed with the responsible authority and parents. (NMS 10.4)