

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC030367
Inspection date	11/01/2012
Inspector	Bridget Goddard
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	03/08/2011
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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

This independent, charitable school is also registered as a children's home. The school accommodates up to 42 boys and girls, usually aged between seven and 19. The school follows the principles of care and education developed by Rudolf Steiner. The school has residential accommodation in eight house groups.

Progress

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

At the full inspection in August 2011, the overall effectiveness of the home was judged as outstanding. There was one recommendation from this inspection. This has been fully addressed and the home has made good progress since the last inspection.

The recommendation concerned ensuring that a system was in place for notifying relevant authorities about significant events within 24 hours. There is now more clarity over what constitutes a significant event, and a comprehensive system is in place to ensure that appropriate notifications are made. Since the last inspection appropriate notifications have been made in a timely fashion, and the recommendation is met.

Young people clearly benefit from highly personalised care, designed around each young person's unique and often complex needs. This means that most young people are continuing to make excellent progress. Young people have maintained their outstanding school attendance, and some young people are now further on track to achieve significant educational success. Young people generally demonstrate exceptional social skills, and these have continued to develop. This means that they are now even better prepared for adult life. They also benefit from a wide range of enjoyable activities which helps them develop important skills for the future. Young people feel that there are now better activities than there were previously. Young people who have lived in the home for some time feel safe and confident that adults have their best interests at heart. They are clear about how to complain and some have followed these processes recently, and think the process is 'fair'.

Young people are consulted on a daily basis by staff about their views and feelings about that day, and what if anything needs to be adjusted to promote better outcomes. Young people are also consulted formally about the running of the home through house meetings, student representative meetings and most organisational development meetings. This means that young people give their views about menus, activities and special celebrations. Most recently young people have also had significant input into the home's recycling strategy and where recycling bins should be placed.

The staff group have made significant progress in developing a cohesive, underpinning philosophy to inform their care of young people. In November 2011 all staff attended a training conference, and managers are consolidating this learning through study groups. This means that young people are now much more likely to experience consistent and informed staff care.

Since the last inspection, senior staff have also analysed and discussed the findings of an inquiry into institutional abuse at an unconnected home. The findings pointed to a failure at senior management level in this other home. This has resulted in a local decision that all senior staff will conduct two unannounced inspections of each house group. In addition, all young people have received a personal letter from the Chief Executive inviting them to discuss any issues with him at a set time each week. Both these initiatives mean that young people are now more protected from possible harm, in that there is a further level of senior management scrutiny of their daily care.

Young people are, therefore, able to benefit from living in a home which has consolidated outstanding practice, but which also continues to make good progress.