

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC038435
Inspection date	19/03/2013
Inspector	Robin Whistlecraft
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	13/12/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This provision is a children's home registered by Ofsted and a 52-week independent residential special school, registered and approved by the Department for Education. It is for boys and girls aged 6 to 17 years with severe and complex learning needs.

There are 10 residential homes, but one was closed during the inspection having recently been refurbished. All young people have a statement of special educational needs. Many who enter this service have had several unsuccessful placements in previous schools. Each home is managed by a team leader and line managed through the care management team and the head of care.

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**.

This home was judged as outstanding at the last full inspection that took place in December 2012. There two recommendations made as a result of that inspection. The home has continued to improve the quality of the care it provides and the outcomes for young people.

Since the last inspection, the home has updated its policy for carrying out the vetting of staff who have lived outside of the UK to ensure that additional checks are carried out to address the period they lived overseas. While no overseas staff have been employed since the last review, the home has carried out appropriate checks on other new staff. This means that young people benefit from full staff recruitment checks.

The last inspection recommended that managers collate their various monitoring and evaluation checks and produce periodic reports that they copy to Ofsted. The situation is complex in this home because there are ten residential house units. An evaluation of records in one house may lead to a different conclusion to another house. The manager has been considering various templates for the final report. He is also exploring approaches adopted by other residential special schools that are children's homes before settling on the final template. In the meantime, the homes existing systems continue to collect and evaluate records from the house units. While this means that the home has not met one recommendation from the last inspection it is taking a thoughtful and measured approach to resolving the complexity it faces. This situation is not having an adverse impact on young people.

Young people benefit from robust and insightful external monitoring of the care they receive and the provision that supports it. The external visitor makes unannounced visits, at various times of the day, and closely considers aspects of daily care practices.

Young people also benefit from a care regime that reacts to concerns robustly. For example, instead of simply putting a reminder on a door to keep it locked, the home carried out a thorough review of what happened. The review identified not only how to prevent further occurrences but led to adaptations that provide more flexible and child-centred care.

The home's approach to leadership and management is generally sound and thorough. The home is improving the quality of its care through the refurbishment of a house unit. Young people experienced a familiarisation programme with their new, temporary house unit, so that their transfer passed smoothly. The embedding of learning support workers means that young people now benefit from continuity between house and school. These developments demonstrate how the home carefully considers the impact of routines and changes on young people.

Managers have also proactively generated interdisciplinary reviews of a number of aspects of the home's approaches to communication, admissions and referrals and the recruitment and development of staff. Staff groups are actively exploring ways to improve the quality of care the home provides by making improvements in these areas. This means that young people experience care that managers are continually looking for ways to improve.

Staff clearly know their young people's communication preferences and behavioural traits well. Young people are relaxed in the company of staff. They are friendly, and show confidence, within their disabilities, to ask for or about various things.

Young people continue to experience progress in the outcomes they experience. For example, they improve their ability to carry out personal hygiene and to communicate with new signs. They improve their attendance in school and reduce the number of incidents in which they are involved.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that reports of actions taken to improve quality of care, as a result of internal monitoring, are completed at six monthly intervals. This is in relation to sending copies of the reports to Ofsted (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 3.14)

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*.