

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040491
Inspection date	02/10/2013
Inspector	Janice Hawtin
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	04/04/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is operated by a local authority and provides short-break care for up to six children and young people with a learning disability or a combined learning and physical disability. The home operates for five nights each week, spanning Wednesday through to Monday morning, with a maximum of six places per night.

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 **inadequate progress**.

At the full inspection in April 2013, the overall rating was judged to be good. Two requirements and one recommendation were made to further improve the quality and standards of care. The home has failed to fully address one of these requirements; this relates to the recruitment records for staff. This has resulted in a judgement of inadequate progress. One requirement has been fully met and a previous recommendation has been raised to a requirement following this inspection.

Recruitment records do not contain full detail and satisfactory information to demonstrate robust and effective safe recruitment practice. Histories of employment contain gaps and unexplained anomalies. In addition verification of why previous employment ended and photographic proof of identity is not available for all staff. Failure to complete these checks increases the potential for inappropriate adults to work with vulnerable children.

The home has taken action to provide adequate means of escape from the building.

All exits leading to the assembly point are now linked to the alarm system and open automatically in the event of a fire. This safeguards both children and staff, improving evacuation times and allowing them to leave the premises without any hindrance.

The frequency of formal supervision provided to permanent staff has improved since the last inspection. This provision has not been extended to agency staff who between them cover several shifts in the home. Consequently they are not provided with the formal support, guidance and personal development opportunities which contribute to assuring the best possible service to children.

The home continues to provide a service which develops children's independence skills and provides activities they would not otherwise be able to access. For many this is the only opportunity they have outside of the education environment to spend time with peers and develop friendships. Notable improvements to communication systems continue to benefit children. Parents provide very positive feedback about this home with one commenting, 'my child is doing brilliantly, their speech is really coming on and behaviour has improved as a result of them being able to communicate better and make choices. This service is a God send, nothing is too much trouble for staff, it's like a second home for my child and they're always out on activities.'

There are improvements to the planning of activities. Changes made to staff's working patterns allows for longer day trips during school holidays. New activities are explored and evaluated for their success and suitability for particular children. Every opportunity is afforded to children to develop independence skills. Regular consultation with parents and attendance at education and review meetings is now embedded in practice. Consequently progress and successful interventions are shared so that development can be maximised. This has been particularly effective in the development of communication systems.

Improvements have been made to the environment; door frames have been painted bright pink to assist movement around the home for children who have a visual impairment. Photographs, pictures and art work are regularly updated to provide a bright and child friendly atmosphere. Information for children has also been improved with the extensive use of picture symbols and, for example, large picture menus so that children can see what food is being prepared.

Arrangement for the safe administration of medication remains robust. It is noteworthy that staff identified a pharmaceutical error which avoided the administration of the wrong drugs to a child. The parent confirmed that this avoided her child being 'really poorly'.

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
26 (2001)	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available for each member of staff in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2 (Regulation 26 (3)(d))	08/11/2013
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed to work in the home receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. In particular provide supervision for agency staff (Regulation 27(4)(a))	08/11/2013

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*.