

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040491
Inspection date	19/01/2012
Inspector	Janice Hawtin
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	11/08/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

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 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. Packages of care vary in length and frequency. Most children stay for one night at a time but others stay for weekends. Where possible children stay in the room they are familiar with and with children of similar needs and interests. The building is single storey, providing level access. Enclosed play areas are provided outdoors where children receive support to access a range of play equipment.

Progress

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

At the full inspection in August 2011, the overall quality rating for the home was judged to be good with outstanding judgements in outcomes for children and young people and the quality of care. Two requirements and three recommendations were made to further improve the overall quality and standards of care.

The home continues to demonstrate some improvements in the outcomes for children and young people and the quality of care provided. One requirement and one recommendation from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed to benefit children and young people. Some attention has been paid to the remaining requirement and recommendations but these have yet to be fully addressed. One further requirement is made as a result of this inspection.

Records for each child and young person now include the statutory provision under which the accommodation is provided. The staff are clear about the legal status of children and young people and its implication for the care provided.

The use of sanctions is rare in this environment where praise, encouragement and rewards are commonly used to affect changes in difficult behaviour. Since the last inspection two have been used and the records now include the views of children and young people. In both cases including these views has evidenced the effectiveness of the sanction and helped individuals take some responsibility for their behaviour.

This service continues to improve outcomes for children and young people, working in consultation with parents and schools to maximise potential for development. There are notable improvements in communication and independence skills. Recording of targets and progress for each child and young person is improving

planning, focusing work, and provides evidence of continuing developments. Recording has also improved with the employment of an administration worker which has impacted on reducing the burden of paperwork on care staff. Access to the local authority recording systems, which can also be updated by care staff has improved communication between professionals and up to date information is readily available to inform practice.

The quality of staff training proves effective in contributing to the development of this service. There is a newly appointed co-ordinator of 'team teach' the programme used to deal with difficult behaviour and making sure any physical interventions are safe to use and protect children and young people from significant harm. Staff can now access training very quickly and can practise techniques in staff meetings to improve competence.

The team manager has completed a coaching and mentoring award and the deputy manager a registered managers' award. Both have undertaken further training in the professional supervision of staff. Whilst some of this learning has yet to be fully embedded in practice some changes in supporting staff and improving the quality of supervision have been made.

Parents continue to be pleased with the service and support received. One parent reported that the home continues to exceed her expectations and that her children thrive in this environment, 'they can't wait to get in the door'.

Access to the internet is not currently available to support education and provide some of the older young people access to social networking sites allowing them to keep in touch with friends and family. This recommendation has yet to be successfully addressed. Some progress has been made, a laptop and computer are on order and arrangements are in place to connect these to the internet. Additional resources will be purchased to allow those with physical or learning difficulties to make best use of these facilities once they are in place.

A written policy which supports the use of electronic monitoring equipment has not been created. Staff can describe the practice around the use of this equipment. It is not used indiscriminately but following assessed need and consent from parents. This provides some protection from what could be intrusive surveillance. For some young people the use of this equipment protects their safety and welfare. The current practice is not formalised in a written policy document which would inform young people, parents and other stakeholders.

A recommendation to apply fire retention devices to the door between the kitchen and dining room has only been met in part; this does not yet fully meet fire safety standards as there is no closure device fitted. The team manager now has a date for this to be fitted and the recommendation will apply until this work is completed.

Since the last inspection the registered person has not notified Ofsted without delay of an event listed in Schedule 5 of the regulations. This compromises the system put in place to monitor the quality of care and safety of children and young people.

Regulation 33 reports contain some improvement since the last inspection and now have detail of date and time of the visit. The most recent reports are easier to read and contain more detail and analysis of the quality of care provided. However the majority lack any discussion with young people, their parents or social workers, missing an opportunity for consultation and independent verification of the quality of care provided.

This home continues to provide a warm and welcoming environment, children and young people benefit from an enthusiastic and attentive staff team.

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
30 (2001)	notify Ofsted without delay any events listed in column 1 of Schedule 5 (Regulation 30 (1))	20/01/2012
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out Regulation 33 visits interviews children, their parents and persons working at the home in order to form an opinion of the care provided. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	23/02/2012

Recommendations

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

- create a written policy which supports the use of any electronic monitoring equipment (NMS 10.5)
- provide internet access to young people to increase the range of educational resources which support and promote learning and allows access to social networking sites within the bounds of e-safety (NMS 4.4)
- ensure that the door between the kitchen and dining area meets fire safety standards. (NMS 10.9)