

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	06/03/2012
Inspector	Louisa Bayley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/12/2011
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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

The home is owned by a registered charity. It provides respite care and short breaks for six children at any one time who have a learning disability or a social and communication disability within the autistic spectrum. Children may also have associated physical disabilities.

Progress

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

At the last inspection, in December 2011, the overall effectiveness of the home was judged to be outstanding. One requirement and one recommendation were raised, both of which have been addressed. The manager has made changes to the format of reporting deficiencies in fire testing equipment and actions taken to resolve them. As a result, safety procedures have been tightened. Since the full inspection, the manager has put systems in place to ensure that all staff receive appropriate training, including physical intervention. A member of the management team has responsibility for the coordination of training. A matrix has been drawn up to clearly illustrate when courses and refreshers are due. Staff say that they work in a well - supported team where communication, supervision and training is a key strength. This means that staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to work effectively and safely with young people.

This home demonstrates continued improvement in the quality of care. Staff place great emphasis on ensuring that young people are able to communicate their wishes and preferences. A new symbols chart has been implemented, ensuring that young people can make choices, and alert staff of their preferences, at any time during their short break. Staff have identified that the system is being used with increasing frequency. Communications books have been devised in response to individual needs. They are used to give regular feed back to parents and schools regarding young people's achievements, wishes and feelings during their short break. Further systems are in place, which are replicated in the family home, to provide consistency and reassurance. Symbols and pictures provide information for young people regarding their short break and how many nights they will be staying. This system has helped to reduce anxieties for both young people and their parents. Staff regularly review care plans and evaluate young people's progress. As a result, levels of supervision of some young people have been reduced. This has had a positive impact, with young people enjoying a level of freedom and the opportunity to take appropriate risks. This is sensitively balanced against individual's well- being, their safety and the safety of others.

The home has developed a relationship with a neighbouring school and a mutually

beneficial agreement has been set up. Staff and young people from the home can use the school grounds, IT equipment, library and outdoor theatre. In return, the school will access the sensory room in the home. This is an example of the positive community links the home is building. As a result, young people will have access to an extended range of opportunities within close proximity. Furthermore, understanding of the home and the young people is being developed within the local community.

Monitoring of the home takes place through monthly Regulation 33 visits, with clear feedback provided to the manager. Schedule 6 monitoring takes place regularly. However, Regulation 34 reporting does not incorporate the views of children, their parents and the placing authority.

The interior of the home is warm and welcoming. It is well decorated and furnished, and provides young people with a good range of toys, equipment and resources. Extensive plans are in place to develop the grounds. A design has been drawn up and staff in the home have worked hard to raise funds to contribute towards the costs. The plans include a variety of sensory experiences which will provide physical and psychological benefits to young people.

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 improving the quality of care provided in the children's home, providing for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1)(b)(3))	24/04/2012

Recommendations

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