

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	21/01/2014
Inspector	Guy Mammatt
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/06/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is run by the local authority. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to ten young people of either sex with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home is purpose-built. It is situated on the site of a local authority special school and has access to some of the school's facilities.

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**.

At the last inspection in June 2013 the home was judged as good. One requirement and one recommendation were made, both of which have since been addressed. The home has also continued to improve the quality of care provided and the outcomes for children during this time.

In response to the requirement made at the last inspection the home has written and implemented a new behaviour management policy that is specific to this service. Additionally the use of physical intervention is now recorded in a bound book without any loose-leaf material being added. This ensures that all records of restraint are clear and that the supporting evidence cannot be lost. Monitoring and evaluation of each incident is robust with precipitating factors being identified and fully acted on.

As a result of the recommendation made at the last full inspection the home now has up-to-date records of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on all agency staff

used This ensures that all staff who work at the home are screened to check if they are suitable to work with vulnerable children.

Leadership and management arrangements are strong. The home displays a commitment to developing and evolving in response to the ever-changing needs of the children and the demands of the health and social sector. The management team are creative in finding solutions to important issues. For example, they are able to demonstrate that the home is effective in involving children who are predominantly non-verbal in meaningful consultation exercises. The evaluation of their consultation is regularly fed back into the care planning process. This ensures that all children feel valued and have a sense of belonging to the home.

Comprehensive monitoring of the home takes place both internally and through an independent visitor. The Registered Manager is open to objective feedback and uses it intelligently to improve the service offered to children.

Outcomes for all children are excellent. One young person has made a successful transition into a foster placement. This would not have been possible without the dedication of the staff team and the nurturing environment of the home. Young people receive effective support into adulthood. The home works collaboratively with their future placements to enable successful transitions.

All young people have good attendance at school and benefit from living at the home by developing their social skills amongst peers. Young people benefit from the range of health interventions and support services that are on offer, including for example Tacpac sessions, reflexology and occupational therapy.

Young people enjoy a wide range of sensory opportunities and purposeful activities, from tasting chilli chocolate to attending a Halloween Monster Ball. This supports their personal development as well as expanding their experiences in a safe predictable environment.

While the home is well maintained, it lacks a degree of homeliness. Risk reduction has led to an institutionalised and sometimes clinical feel throughout. This does not detract from the quality of care provided or the professionalism of the staff team. However, further attention needs to be paid the decoration and furnishings of the home.

All of the stakeholders consulted unanimously praise the home and feel confident that the children are happy there. Representatives of the placing authority state 'the staff are a skilled team who fully understand the intricacies of the children they look after' and that 'it is difficult to fault the service'.

The home has established a culture of openness and transparency which encourages vigilance and promotes a sense of shared responsibility for the safe care of children. Minor issues are resolved quickly without controversy or objection. This ensures that the children are always the centre of its focus

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 the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. Risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel (NMS 10.3)

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*.