

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	04/03/2013
Inspector	Jo Stephenson
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	28/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is registered to provide short breaks for up to four young people who have learning and/or physical disabilities. A local authority owns and operates this setting.

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**.

The judgement at the last full inspection in November 2012 was good. Young people experience a short break service in a nurturing and supportive environment that enables them to make progress in their lives. The home demonstrates a continued capacity to promote positive outcomes for young people by constantly evaluating the quality of care provided. For example, the manager has introduced robust and diverse systems to gather feedback on the service from young people and their families.

Relationships between staff and young people are excellent. Staff use a varied range of verbal and non-verbal communication methods, such as Makaton, to converse with young people. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the challenging and complex care needs of the young people and ensure these are integrated in internal support plans and statutory short break plans. Risk assessments are comprehensive and consider the abilities and vulnerabilities of young people. This information is used to review statutory plans and evaluate the need for young people to continue to access this short break service. As a result, young people receive personalised care that meets their needs and promotes their development.

Effective consultation with young people and their families is a considerable strength of the home. Staff complete feedback forms with young people during each period of placement. These records are in pictorial and symbol formats that allow young people to convey what they have enjoyed about their stay, what they have achieved and what they would like to do during their next visit. Young people are also asked to suggest changes they would like to see made to the home. Feedback is incorporated into internal 'All About Me' documents that provide an overview of young people's likes, dislikes, routines and activity preferences. These records are reviewed with parents to monitor the positive impact using the service has on young people's lives and to set targets for young people to achieve to develop their social and emotional skills. Families are invited to attend 'coffee mornings' and consultation events in the home and asked to complete questionnaires used to evaluate the effectiveness of the home. Responses are incorporated into a thematic analysis of the home and used to shape the development plan for the service. Subsequently, young people and their families are involved in the development of the home.

Young people are encouraged to build friendships with other young people using the service and this is considered in the assessment of group compatibility. For example, some young people stay at the home at the same time as their school friends. This means that young people are able to spend time with their friends in a social setting and participate in group activities with them that would not usually be practicable.

The home provides an extremely comfortable and stimulating environment that reflects the sensory development needs of young people. The home has recently purchased additional sensory equipment including water light tubes, soft furnishings and interactive mirror boards. These resources provide young people with visual and touch sensitive stimulation to develop their sensory skills. Staff are committed to providing young people with a varied range of activities to enhance their experience in the home. They recognise the often short attention span of some young people and are proactive in engaging young people in a programme of pastimes ranging from community trips to computer games. The home operates a high staff to young person ratio and this means that young people are able to participate in both group and individual activities that meet their needs and reflect their hobbies and interests.

The manager ensures that robust health and safety and fire safety regulations are adhered to. All young people have detailed emergency evacuation plans in place and this means that staff are able to determine the support individual young people will require in an emergency. Staff receive regular fire safety training and records show that fire drills and tests are regularly completed. Environmental risk assessments consider the individual support needs of young people and detail strategies in place to reduce risks. Staff confirm they receive regular formal supervision and participate in training sessions to refresh their knowledge and discuss practice issues. The manager completes regular audits of case files to review the progress made by young people and the actions taken by staff to support this progress. Therefore, young people work with staff that are committed to encouraging their personal development.

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*.