

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	23/01/2012
Inspector	Louisa Bayley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	08/11/2011
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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

This home is purpose-built for children and young people aged between 5 and 17 years on admission, who have a learning or physical disability. Up to six children or young people may be accommodated at any time. The home provides two different services within the same building. Short breaks are available for young people over weekends and school holidays. Boarding placements are also available, so that during the school term the home provides care and accommodation to young people attending Churchill Park School or another accessible special school.

The home is run by Break, a registered charity, under contract to the Local Authority Children's Services.

Progress

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

At the last inspection, in November 2011, the overall effectiveness for this service was judged as outstanding. Two requirements and one recommendation were made. This provider demonstrates continued improvement in the quality of care. There is a clear focus on development that promotes positive outcomes for young people.

During the last inspection a requirement was raised regarding fire safety. The manager has thoroughly addressed this area. She has placed great emphasis on ensuring that young people are safe. A holistic approach has led to a trip to the fire station with the young people, to promote their own awareness of safety. Systems put in place ensure all actions taken in response to faulty fire equipment are fully recorded and followed up. The appropriate number of fire drills has taken place. Contingency fire evacuation procedures have been implemented in the case of any fault preventing exit through the prescribed manner. A recent audit by the fire service found the arrangements in place to be satisfactory. Furthermore, the manager was commended on the, 'robust temporary measures in place.' As a result, staff have a clear understanding of the fire procedures that promote the safety of young people.

The manager has worked hard to establish links with the local police. A procedure is being developed, which has regard to local police protocols, regarding young people who are absent without authority. This is in progress. Additionally, the manager is undertaking work with the police to promote the young people's safety in other areas, such as the internet. This demonstrates commitment to ensuring that young people are kept safe and encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety.

Staff continue to receive good levels of support through supervision and training. New staff receive a thorough induction to ensure they are competent in working with

the young people. A key strength of this home is the deployment of responsibilities across the staff team. As a result, individual team members are able to utilise their particular skills to enhance the knowledge of the team and improve the quality of care. An example of this has been in the area of communication. Talking mats have been developed and are used with young people to gain their views. Residents' meetings have a new format. This is in recognition of the fact that some meetings are dominated by the more verbally able. Consequently, link workers meet with young people at least once per month, on a one-to-one basis. This enables every young person to have their views heard. Young people have been encouraged to contribute more widely to menu planning. Staff recognise that although choices are made using pictures, young people may not like the food they have chosen once they have tasted it. This has led to a chart being implemented for young people to use a smiley face or an unhappy face against their meal choice once they have eaten it. This means that staff are continually checking that young people are happy with the choices they have made.

Young people continue to receive well planned care. They say they 'feel safe' and are able to talk to staff if they are worried or anxious. Parents, young people and social workers are consulted with regularly regarding the quality of care. One young person said of the home that he 'loves it a lot and wants to come again.' A parent said on behalf of their daughter, 'she loves the people and the house.' Parents say they are happy with the service provided. The staff team demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of the young people. Staff recognise triggers for behaviour and plan accordingly when arranging short breaks. They are supported to use individual behaviour strategies through input from a psychologist. This results in young people receiving consistent boundaries that are appropriate to their specific needs.

The home continues to positively promote equality and diversity. An excellent example of this is the volunteer information pack. This has been designed specifically to meet the needs of a potential volunteer who has autism. The information is comprehensive and set out in a format which meets individual needs.

Since the last inspection, the development plan has been evaluated and a new one drafted. The new plan is through and identifies areas of focus for the coming year. There is a clear emphasis on continual improvement of the quality of care and outcomes for young people.