

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC408655
Inspection date	14/02/2014
Inspector	Maire Atherton
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	08/10/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2014

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is for seven young people. The home is run by a private organisation, providing care and accommodation for young people with learning disabilities.

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 **satisfactory progress**.

This home was judged adequate overall at the last full inspection in October 2013. There were five requirements and seven recommendations arising from that visit. All the requirements and the majority of the recommendations have been addressed. One recommendation is repeated and there are one requirement and three recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

Since the last inspection there has been a review of practice to ensure that the privacy and dignity of young people is effectively promoted. For example young people confirm that bathrooms doors are now fully closed and locked when in use and their personal care needs, in respect of hair care, are met by staff adhering to detailed care plans. Staff are more sensitive to the use of language and take care not to use institutional terms.

A new reward system has been introduced across the home and school. Staff award young people points for positive behaviour, contributions and progress. Young people can spend these points using an online system. The manager is looking to

reinforce this with more tangible instant rewards where this better meets the needs of the young people. Generally the positive and warm relationships between the staff and young people provide a strong foundation for the promotion of positive behaviour. The manager has considered the use of sanctions and as a result there is an agreed list of sanctions for each young person for whom sanctions are an appropriate way to challenge unacceptable behaviour. Although sanctions are not used regularly they are not always responsively or flexibly applied and can occasionally serve to escalate challenging behaviour. Where physical intervention is used there is a clear framework applied to review the incident. In the light of a recent review the manager adapted a care plan to remove a perceived trigger for challenging behaviour.

Staff have become more proactive in the promotion and protection of the emotional and mental health of young people living in the home, securing specialist help when required. However this approach is not fully sustained in ensuring other health needs are met in a timely fashion.

The manager has obtained specialist advice about enabling young people to build dens safely and has created a safe space in the garden for this to happen. The manager knows what the notifiable events are and when and how notifications are to be made; there have been no such events since the last visit.

Staff have provided more one-to-one opportunities for young people and have worked hard on promoting alternative communication systems with young people to good effect. This has enabled young people to make choices and express preferences more easily in their day-to-day lives. Young people are building on this and are developing new vocal skills and initiating communication.

The children's guide has been revised. There are two versions, one for young people who can read and another developed for staff to talk through with young people using pictures.

Half of the staff team are now up to date with appraisals and this remains a work in progress. This recommendation is repeated. There are some members of the staff team who are not yet enrolled on the required care qualifying course.

There continues to be improvements to the home environment. The kitchen has been refurbished and some bedrooms have been redecorated reflecting the interests of individual young people. The keypad on a door is now risk assessed and is used infrequently. Half of the young people have been taught how to use it and can open the door if they want to when the keypad is operational.

The management structure of the home has changed since the last inspection. The manager is now supported by four senior staff, taking on responsibilities previously held by the team leader post. The manager envisages that this will strengthen the management and leadership of the home. There is a stable staff team in post. This has contributed to an improvement in the consistency of their approach, thus creating sound routines leading to improving outcomes for young people.

The manager has an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home through regular monitoring. The latest review of quality of care is ready for submission to Ofsted. There is a development plan in place, which the manager is working to.

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
20 (2001)	develop a more urgent approach to the promotion and protection of the physical health of the children accommodated in a children's home (Regulation 20 (1))	30/04/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are skilled at diffusing difficult situations to avoid escalation, by responding flexibly (Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, Volume 5, paragraph 2.87)
- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually (NMS 19.6)
- ensure all staff are enabled to attain the required care qualification (NMS 18.5)

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*.