

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC059782
Inspection date	17/01/2014
Inspector	Sharon Lewis
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	23/07/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is owned and managed by a private company. Care and accommodation is provided for up to six children 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 **good progress**.

This interim unannounced inspection focuses on the progress made since the last inspection. The overall effectiveness judgement made at the last inspection in July 2013 was good, with outstanding outcomes. The two requirements and two recommendations from the last inspection have been fully met. Children receive better protection from the updated safeguarding policy and the sanction record. These documents promote the best interests of children and now meet regulatory requirements.

At the last inspection the home was also asked to consider two good practice recommendations. These related to children influencing staff appraisals and updating the gas safety certificate. The staff appraisal form, now includes a section for children's views. The home promptly respond to health and safety hazards; the gas safety certificate was updated within two days of the last inspection.

Following this inspection one requirement is being made to ensure the quality assurance process complies with legislation. The home complete quality of care reports, in accordance with Regulation 34. These reports include the views of children and highlight areas requiring further improvement. Reports, however, do not

include consultation with parents or placing authorities, as required in legislation. This shortfall does not have an impact on children; the home has a good relationship and open dialogue with parents and placing authorities.

At the heart of this inspection are the outcomes for children, which continue to be very good. Children quickly settle into life at the home and maintain constructive and nurturing relationships with staff. Children describe staff as 'fantastic' and state that they 'love Footsteps'. Children value education and have good attainment and attendance at their respective schools. Children are growing in confidence, their vocabulary is increasing and schools comment on the positive outcomes. Leaders and managers state that children are thriving and 'developing amazingly'.

Staff have a very good understanding of children's diverse needs. Children have the opportunity to enjoy a varied cuisine including international dishes and those that reflect their culture. Staff advocate for their current and future needs. This includes supporting them with contact arrangements and liaising with involved professionals and family members. Children occasionally reside in the home, prior to moving into a foster placement. Staff assist with this process; ensuring identified foster carers are able to meet the needs of the specific child. Children benefit from the high staffing levels which mean there is always a staff member to offer individual time.

Children benefit from the home's proactive discharge practices. The organisation has a semi-independent unit, where young people can move on to. Since the last inspection two young people have made this successful transition. Young people benefit from the good continuity of care, as staff work across both establishments. The home celebrates endings ensuring young people have a leaving party and receive valued gifts; examples being cooking utensils and audio visual equipment.

Children engage in life enriching activities which include visiting theme parks, the seaside and attractions in Central London. Children enjoy engaging in their local community, eating out, going to the cinema, shopping, and to social clubs. Children incorporate exercise in their weekly routines; this includes going on walks, swimming, trampolining and playing football. Children enjoy having parties; they regularly celebrate their birthdays, festivals and meaningful events. A recent example being Christmas where children assisted with putting up the decorations internally and externally; creating a winter wonderland in the garden.

Children are more independent, taking responsibility for their personal care and undertaking household tasks. Children assist with grocery shopping, preparing meals and making their own snacks. They assist with their laundry, cleaning, clearing the table and washing up. Children influence the home, helping to choose items for the communal areas and the décor for their bedrooms. Children learn to develop personally and address socially unacceptable behaviour; this includes swearing and sexist attitudes.

Children confirm that they 'feel safe' and they learn the importance of personal safety and road safety. Staff also raise children's awareness of environmental hazards. The home continues to work very successfully with children who have a

wide range of emotional and behavioural needs. Staff positively encourage children through rewarding good behaviour. Staff occasionally have to issue sanctions and physically restrain children. Sanction records now include children's views and the effectiveness of each disciplinary measure. This process enables children to understand the consequence of their actions, helping them to develop socially acceptable behaviour.

Since the last inspection there have been changes in the staff team. New staff are experienced within social care and bring a renewed enthusiasm to the staff team. Recruitment procedures, meet regulatory requirements, ensuring suitable staff members are employed. Children are able to submit interview questions for leaders and managers to ask prospective employees. New staff undergo a comprehensive induction and the staff team receive on-going training to meet children's needs. Leaders and managers challenge poor practice and if necessary undertake disciplinary action.

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)	ensure Regulation 34 reports include consultation with parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	01/04/2014

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*.