

1239948

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2020.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/11/2024	Full	Good
10/05/2023	Full	Outstanding
07/06/2022	Full	Good
20/04/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children continue to make progress because of the committed and engaging team of staff who provide a nurturing environment in which they can flourish. The consistent, long-standing staff team achieves stability by providing routine and establishing positive relationships with the children.

Relationships are built on trust, humour and openness. Laughter and positive interaction were witnessed throughout the inspection. Staff speak fondly about the children and want good outcomes for their future.

Proactive staff ensure that children's numerous accomplishments, including receiving The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, academic achievements and opportunities for greater independence, are celebrated and shared with relevant people. This promotes children's self-esteem and provides a sense of belonging.

Children regularly attend meetings in relation to their care plans because considerate staff provide them with information and guidance that enable them to express their wishes, views and feelings. However, the views of others, such as professionals and family members, are not regularly sought or recorded by the home's manager or the independent person. Consequently, their views are not routinely considered.

Staff and managers prioritise children's physical and mental well-being. Children are encouraged and supported to attend health appointments and specialist services. As a result, their emotional and physical needs are met.

Staff proactively help children understand the importance of education. Advocacy for children is a strength of the home. For one child this means their prospects have significantly improved because of a significant improvement in their attendance and individual support.

All staff understand the importance of children spending time with the people who are important to them. Proactive and caring staff ensure that children are prepared, and well-thought-out arrangements provide a positive experience for them. Nevertheless, on one occasion, the staff's ability to grant permission for additional events was unclear.

Children benefit from a range of activities outside the home environment, such as attending the gym, meeting friends and hobbies. This has helped increase their social and independence skills. Additionally, children have enjoyed short holidays because of the committed staff who want children to have positive shared experiences.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children are helped to understand and navigate their emotions and behaviours through strengths-based, child-centred key-work sessions. Empathetic staff carefully record sensitive key-work sessions using caring language. This child-centred approach enables children to feel empowered.

Prolonged missing-from-home episodes have significantly reduced because creative staff make positive attempts to prevent such issues from occurring. Positively, when children occasionally go missing from home, they experience a well-coordinated response from staff. The staff work with the police and others in the children's networks to locate them, enabling their safe return at the earliest opportunity.

Staff manage behaviour in line with children's support plans. Physical intervention is only used when necessary. Effective reparation work between children enables them to live in a calm environment and build respect for each other and develop emotional resilience.

All staff, including staff who have recently joined the home, know the children well. Children's triggers and behaviours, such as changes in physical appearance or facial expressions, are well understood. However, due to a lack of dynamic and focused risk assessments, current risks and concerns are not adequately identified. Furthermore, when a serious incident of self-injurious behaviour occurred, medical advice was not sought, and prompt actions, including necessary observations, were not recorded. As a result, staff failed to check on the child regularly to ensure their safety and well-being once they had settled for the night.

Staff are unclear regarding the use of surveillance in relation to safeguarding children, such as justifying replaying footage to observe past events or allegations. Furthermore, there is a lack of clear recording and consent from the local authority.

However, the management of allegations against staff is sensitive and child focused. The registered manager and senior leaders ensure that children receive a timely outcome and reparation support. This helps maintain the trusting and caring relationships between staff and children.

Overall, staff work effectively to keep children safe and promote their well-being. All staff have received mandatory and specialist training to ensure that children's current needs are met.

Health and safety arrangements are of a good standard. The home is well maintained, and children are actively encouraged to participate in regular fire drills. This ensures that children know what to do in an emergency to keep themselves and others safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A long-standing respected registered manager continues to manage the home. Staff speak highly of the support and guidance they receive. This means children are cared for by a consistent and dedicated staff team.

Monitoring systems and quality assurance are consistent and effective. The manager's review of the quality of care offers reflection and insight into the home's functions. Consequently, the registered manager and senior leaders understand the home's strengths and areas for improvement and development. As a result, the requirement raised at the last inspection has been met.

All staff receive regular supervision. Although the quality is variable, staff have an opportunity to discuss their development and well-being and the children's progress. Tasks delegated to other senior members of the team by the registered manager are monitored through regular group discussions. This ensures a consistent approach for the whole team.

New staff receive a thorough induction and many opportunities to familiarise themselves with the home's policies and procedures. As a result, staff feel prepared and informed on their first shift.

Team meetings provide a platform for informed discussions and reflection. Staff speak positively about having the opportunity to share good practice and knowledge acquired from training events. This productive approach means that staff practice is consistent and informed.

The leadership team prioritises staff development in line with the home's statement of purpose. Staff have continued to access good-quality training to support children's complex needs and behaviours. Staff welcome specialist training and readily verbalise knowledge acquired and how it informs their practice.

An additional layer of scrutiny is provided by the independent person. Monthly visits are well recorded and provide an oversight of the home. However, the views of others, including professionals, are often omitted. This is a missed opportunity for positive views to be shared more widely and matters of concern to be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child. (Regulation 7 (2)(e)) This specifically relates to securing the views of professionals and significant others in relation to children's care planning through the independent person reporting process.	30 April 2026
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi))	28 February 2026
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy.	31 December 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that each child's placement plan sets out the permissions that their placing authority has delegated to the registered person. This should clarify the staff's ability to grant permission for school trips, sleepovers, or the child's involvement in sporting, leisure and cultural activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 30, paragraph 6.2)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1239948

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Registered provider address: Head of Children and Young Peoples Services, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2EA

Responsible individual: Sam Bushby

Registered manager: Carl Whittaker

Inspector

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector

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