

1259734

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This is a purpose-built local authority home. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people. The statement of purpose states that it helps children and young people to recover from experiences which have rendered them vulnerable and disrupted their primary relationships. The home uses the 'Pillars of Parenting' approach to inform its work with children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2019.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 6 August 2019

Previous inspection judgement: good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Young people enjoy living at this home. They say that this is because of their relationships with the staff who care for them. Staff recognise that the strength of their relationships with young people has the power to change their lives for the better.

During COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the young people have continued with their education. Two of the young people remained in full-time education at school, and the other young person had a mix of online tutoring and education at home. This achievement reflects the tenacity of the children, registered manager, staff and schools.

A prom party was organised by the staff to celebrate young people's academic achievements. The young people, in their new prom dresses, were driven in a special car to afternoon tea with the Mayor. This was attended by their families and the adults who are important to them. Through the staff investment, young people discover new possibilities towards their futures.

During the more restrictive period of COVID-19, the staff encouraged and supported the young people to follow their individual interests and talents. They engaged in a range of creative activities and music lessons facilitated by the staff. All the young people enjoy singing and playing musical instruments. Staff recognise that music is a form of self-expression and can boost self-confidence.

Young people spoke enthusiastically about a surprise camping trip. This involved them climbing a mountain and participating in other outdoor activities. One young person described her delight at standing behind a waterfall. She said that this is something she will never forget.

Staff also recently arranged a music festival for the young people in the garden. The thoughtfulness of the registered manager and the staff sends a strong message to the young people that they value and care for them.

The safety of children

Staff have up-to-date knowledge of a broad and relevant range of safeguarding matters. Risk assessments and management plans are dynamic and offer clear guidance to the adults in response to the changing needs of the children and young people.

Personalised plans and approaches address specific vulnerabilities and guide the adults with what to do. Staff set appropriate boundaries that are warm, supportive,

and have clear expectations. As a result, young people are learning to modulate and self-regulate their emotions and behaviours.

Parents spoke positively about the quality of care and how the young people are being helped by the staff. Young people in times of emotional distress display high-risk behaviours. Parents and a social worker said that the staff manage and respond to these risks well.

The registered manager works well with partners within the organisation and with the wider professional network. She takes the lead in ensuring effective communication sharing. As a result, the right agencies are involved in participating in discussions, sharing information, and receiving feedback on a continual basis. This enables the staff to develop a greater understanding of, and response to, the young people's strengths and risks.

Leaders and managers

Contingency planning and risk assessment in response to COVID-19 are excellent. The staff clearly understand these plans and apply them appropriately.

The home has experienced significant staff changes since the last full inspection, and the team is in a relatively new stage of developing as a group. Recruitment and retention of staff continues to be an ongoing challenge. An active recruitment campaign to address the staff shortages is place. In the meantime, they have seconded staff from other homes to cover the shortfalls.

The registered manager ensures that the staff are provided with regular reflective supervision. There is good management oversight, clear expectations, and actions carried forward. A strong staff induction, a mix of online and in-house training have ensured that the staff are equipped with the right skills to meet the needs of the young people. As a result, staff feel well supported to fulfil their roles.

The registered manager gives thoughtful consideration of the impact that a new young person joining the home may have. This helps to avoid disruption and instability for the young person in the future, and for the other young people in the home.

The manager and leaders promote an inclusive culture in the home. This supports the young people to explore their individuality and develop a positive self-view.

The home's statement of purpose is due a review, including an update on the current staffing and response to COVID-19. But, the culture and ethos of the home, as described in the statement of purpose, is shown in the staff practice and the positive engagement with the young people.

No requirements or recommendations are made following this visit.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1259734

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Registered provider address: Hampshire Council, 3rd Floor, Elizabeth II Court North, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Joylindsey Mahoney

Inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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