

1259734

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2019.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 2 September 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 August 2021

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: 6 August 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/08/2019	Full	Good
25/07/2018	Full	Good
19/02/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff and managers meet the diverse needs of the children. Staff seek appropriate resources and information to support each child's individual personality and identity. Acceptance of gender identity is encouraged by staff and managers. Therefore, children can openly access services and information, and discuss issues with staff or other children without fear of prejudice.

The home is bright, welcoming and clean. Children personalise their own space which reflects their identity, views and beliefs. The children said that they are happy to be able to decorate their rooms and be able to express their identity freely. Institutionalised practice, for example locking the kitchen door at night, was addressed quickly during the inspection.

Children have access to information to support them if needed. Children know how to complain and have been supported by staff when needing to do so. At times, negative comments towards the children from staff have caused unnecessary disharmony and have led to the children making a formal complaint.

Complaints are managed well and quickly by the registered manager. Children are spoken to after any complaint has concluded to ensure that they feel heard and listened to. Focus on restoring relationships between staff and children is good, which means that the positive atmosphere and environment within the home is restored quickly.

Good communication between staff and professionals aids the consistent approach to caring for the children. Staff have supported children with education and activities throughout the pandemic. When children are not in education, staff have been proactive in challenging decision-making and advocated well for the children. Education remains a priority and children are encouraged to contribute to meetings and decision-making. As a result, they feel valued and heard by professionals and staff when making decisions about their future.

Children are encouraged by staff and managers to engage in a healthy lifestyle. For example, the registered manager recently bought new bicycles for the children. The children enjoy going for cycle rides as this sometimes deflects from negative thoughts or behaviour. One child was accompanied by a member of staff on a sailing holiday. This was a positive experience for the child, who now has an interest in sailing. They recognised that during this holiday there were no incidents of poor behaviour and no intervention needed by staff. This gave the child a sense of achievement.

When there is no plan in place for older children moving on to independence, the registered manager advocates well and challenges decision-making by other professionals. This ensures that the best interests of the children are considered and

acted upon, so they remain included in their own care planning and are appropriately prepared for moving on to the next chapter of their lives.

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

Staff promote children's safety. Staff are alert to the potential risks and ensure that there is urgent action when children leave the home without permission or when staff are not aware of their plans or whereabouts. Staff working in the home are clear about, and follow, procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of the children. There has been a delay on occasions in notifying Ofsted of serious incidents. This has an impact on the regulator's ability to review safeguarding practice in the home. However, the action taken by staff in response to these incidents is appropriate.

Health and safety matters are well managed by staff and managers. Minor maintenance issues are rectified quickly. All new staff and children are part of a fire evacuation drill within a few days of being at the home. This ensures that children live in a safe environment and can take necessary action to keep themselves and others safe in the event of a fire or accident within the home.

Medication arrangements are safe. Health plans are updated when necessary following review or medical appointments. Children are supported to attend all health appointments, including those relating to their mental health. Staff support the children emotionally and physically. One child had previously not engaged with services and can now attend appointments with the support of staff. As a result, this child is receiving specialist support to improve their mental health and well-being.

Communication between parents and staff is good. Learning gained from feedback has improved the way in which parents receive information. As a result, relationships between children and their parents have improved and children enjoy seeing their family members.

Children's behaviour, and the reasons for this, are known and understood by staff. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated by managers and staff. In some assessments, the assessed level of risk does not reflect the serious concerns noted in specific areas, such as child sexual exploitation. As a result, there is the potential for the level of response from professionals to be insufficient. However, this has not occurred in practice and multi-agency working arrangements are good.

The registered manager has good oversight and input to the matching process. All children who currently live in the home are considered, alongside any new child coming to live in the home. This ensures that there is a focus on safe matches and minimal disruption to the children's care.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a competent and efficient registered manager who has high expectations and aspirations for the children and staff. All staff receive

appropriate training. Bespoke training from different professionals is also sourced to ensure that staff can support the unique needs of the children. As a result, children are cared for by knowledgeable staff.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the home's action plan and know the strengths and weaknesses of staff and practice. The registered manager has good oversight of progress and a clear record of any emerging concerns. There are good quality assurance tools and effective monitoring systems in place. This ensures that the staff are completing their delegated tasks and recording is up to date. However, this is not without some errors, as seen in the risk assessments.

Senior leaders learn from constructive feedback from their staff. The induction for new staff is reviewed regularly. Recent discussions have informed positive and productive improvements to the induction document, for example, more observation of practice to ensure that new staff are competent in their roles.

Supervision of staff and annual appraisals are well documented, with actions, development and training identified and efficiently acted upon. Staff are supported and nurtured by senior staff and managers, who recognise the well-being of staff is important to be able to provide good care for children.

The home is regularly reviewed by an independent visitor, which provides an additional layer of scrutiny and oversight. However, some reports lack evidence to support statements made by the visitor. Views of parents and professionals are not always obtained. There is a lack of challenge from the registered manager regarding the quality of these reports. The lack of rigour and clarity in these reports means that the registered manager does not receive clear feedback on the quality of care provided.

Leaders and managers ensure that plans for individual children comprehensively identify their needs. They learn from complaints, listen to children and implement changes where necessary to improve the care and experience given to children. The statement of purpose reflects the ethos of the home.

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, 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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(viii)(ix))	28 January 2022
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (2)(a) (4)(a)(b))	28 January 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure the information relating to any risk is clearly and correctly recorded in children's risk assessments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1259734

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Joylindsey Mahoney

Inspector

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector

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