

1259734

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a purpose-built local authority home. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children. The statement of purpose says that it 'help(s) children 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 was registered with Ofsted in September 2017.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 July 2018

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: 20 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2018	Full	Good

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
In meeting the quality standards, if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	14/09/2018
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; The registered person must ensure that within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a-c)) In particular, to ensure that records demonstrate these timescales have been adhered to.	14/09/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that the children in their care understand their rights as a looked-after child, or child living in a children's home. Children must be informed of how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.19)
- Each child should have permission for staff to administer first aid and non-prescription medication from a person with parental responsibility for them recorded in their relevant plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.14)
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1) In particular, employment records for casual staff must include reasons for recruitment decisions and evidence obtained to establish a right to work in the UK.
- Case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The manager and staff make every effort to support young people moving in or out of the home and ensure that they are ready to make the transition. Planning is meticulous, with a clear focus on the needs of the young people, including those already living at the home.

Staff strongly support young people's education. This is by liaising with schools, advocating on behalf of young people and encouraging them to make the most of opportunities. This is exemplified by one professional's comment that, 'They were very proactive in finding out what was happening with a young person's education as there were some issues and they pushed to get them sorted.' More widely, staff help young people to make college and job applications, find work placements and undertake life-skills qualifications.

Staff capture young people's views well in records of key-work sessions and detail actions arising from them. House meeting minutes and complaints records demonstrate how requests or concerns expressed by young people are either acted on or explanations given as to why it is not possible to comply. This has improved the experience young people have of living in the home.

For various reasons, a few staff are off work. Even though colleagues or managers cover shifts, often workers are brought in from the authority's other homes too. Some young people dislike this having to happen, but there are always staff on duty whom they know well and who undertake the majority of work with them. Handover meetings are effective in giving any staff unfamiliar with young people an understanding of them and their circumstances.

One young person spoke of going out 'as a family' and another said staff 'race you up to bed', illustrating the warm relationships that staff foster. One member of the team has been given the role of 'homeliness lead', which has provided a focus on maintaining attractive surroundings.

Young people make progress, as described in documentation and recounted by professionals and some parents. When relapses occur, staff understand why and look to address the reasons. However, the home does not have a means to measure progress over the length of a young person's stay and it is therefore difficult to evidence the degree of change.

Staff offer nurture, guidance and boundaries. One said, 'We see the children as individuals and are not easily defeated: if one approach doesn't work we will come up with alternatives.' This sums up the home's character and approach.

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

One professional commended staff for being 'very proactive in developing safety plans' and being 'adaptable depending on behaviour and how a young person is growing as an individual'. The staff's understanding of safeguarding and missing processes and practice is sound. They take steps to reduce risks and work with young people to fill gaps in their knowledge or appreciation of dangers.

Managers and staff explain to young people and their parents why they talk to other professionals about safeguarding concerns, even if a young person involved would rather they did not. This ensures that every opportunity is taken to reduce risks.

Staff discuss and record occasions when sanctions have been imposed or physical interventions have taken place, which ensures a consistent approach. However, the dating of entries and debriefings for young people or staff have not been fully implemented following the requirement made at the last inspection. In addition, discussions with the user of the measure do not record practice or emotional impact issues.

Risk assessments, such as those for activities outside the home, are thorough. They

show a detailed understanding of the facilities used, helped by staff visits to venues beforehand. A recently developed health and safety audit is detailed and identifies minor improvements needed, which the manager has plans to address.

A filing error led to a member of staff being employed before references had been verified; it was discovered and rectified within a matter of days and the manager has put a new process in place to avoid a repetition. Casual staff already known to the home, for example from a student placement, did not have recruitment files that systematically record employment decisions or hold information such as how the right to work in the UK was verified.

No young person spoken to could name someone outside of the home or personal contacts (such as parents or a social worker) that they would speak to if they had a concern they did not feel able to raise with staff. They were unaware of the children's commissioner and the role she has in providing advice and assistance for children looked after away from their families.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager and her team seek to continually develop the service they provide. The manager's wish to improve how young people's attainments are celebrated and recorded has led to her making a presentation to an authority-wide conference on supporting children and young people to enjoy and achieve.

Supervision focuses on professional development and improving practice. It is a highly reflective process, helped by the journals staff are encouraged to keep.

Several changes have been made to respond to requirements and recommendations set at the last inspection. However, not all have been fully implemented. Those about gaining permission to give first aid and to include the child's voice in plans have been reissued as the use of old forms has meant that they have been missed for some young people. File audits had not identified the omissions.

On occasion, the manager has had cause to be concerned about the performance of individuals or agencies but has not appropriately challenged practice. In addition, when statutory documentation has not been made available by the placing authority, staff have not escalated their concerns when requests to provide it have not been responded to.

Professionals and most parents value regular communication with the manager and staff and their involvement in the wider network. A social worker commented, 'I am genuinely impressed with the detailed and thorough approach of the staff; they are open about issues and the contact between me and the home. I am really positive about our working relationship.' Staff have contacted other agencies and local business to establish relationships that benefit young people.

Some key documents do not identify their authors and are unsigned and/or undated. Plans do not show when they have been shared with others, such as the young person,

parents and social workers.

The manager and her deputy have high ideals for the home and each young person. They are aware of young people's strengths and, together with a committed staff group, take whatever action they can to improve the young person's experience of living in the home.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: Susan Lomax

Registered manager: Lauren Moloney

Inspector

Chris Peel, social care inspector

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