

2508451

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 provides care for up to four children who experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2020. They were not present for the inspection.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Most children have made progress and are well supported by a committed staff team. The experience for one child was very difficult, which limited the progress they were able to make. It also affected the quality of care that the other children experienced.

Staff support children in building positive relationships with them. Staff understand the children's individual needs and carefully consider how they can best support their progress and development. The children's plans clearly outline their identified support needs and how staff intend to meet them.

All the children benefit from individualised education packages, and most of them engage well with this support. The staff provide positive encouragement and a range of additional learning opportunities when required.

Children with complex needs benefit from well-coordinated care. This care has helped provide some stability in their lives. One child received extensive multi-disciplinary specialist support in response to their presenting needs. However, this support was unable to prevent the unplanned ending of this child's time in the home.

Staff have developed positive working relationships with the children's families and external professionals. This promotes a culture of working together to ensure that the children are well supported and benefit from a range of positive role models in their lives. Staff communicate effectively with the children's birth families and support family time in accordance with the children's care plans.

The home has experienced significant staff turnover since the last inspection, with several members of staff being redeployed elsewhere in the organisation. This has had little impact on the children, as several of them also moved on from the home during this time. Most of the children have benefited from having a stable and consistent team of staff to support them, and they can identify preferred staff when they require help or support.

Children enjoy various planned leisure activities and positive experiences. These experiences enable them to create positive memories of their time living in the home. Staff keep child-friendly records to reflect these experiences.

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

Staff have a good understanding of how children behave when they are distressed. The staff respond appropriately and encourage the children to make positive choices. Despite this, staff have sometimes been unable to support the children and have had to call the police. The decisions in these cases have been proportionate.

When one of the children was distressed, staff were unable to keep them safe. This had a negative impact on the other children and affected staff's confidence. Specifically, some staff are anxious about the possibility of new children with similar needs moving in. Managers took immediate action when these concerns arose, organising for the child to quickly move to a home that was better suited to meeting their needs.

Staff provide a well-coordinated and prompt response when the children go missing from home. The staff work well with the children's families and familiar adults to try and ascertain the children's whereabouts. Staff routinely look for the children while they are away from the home. They use information gathered from other professionals and return home interviews to further develop their understanding of the children's activities when they are away from the home.

Staff carefully reflect when things do not go as planned. Managers assist staff in considering the most effective ways to support the children. The staff team has worked well alongside specialist agencies and other professionals to help the children. Staff demonstrate strong resilience and togetherness. As a result, staff maintain a clear focus on keeping the children safe and promoting their welfare.

Staff are curious about the children's past experiences. Effective management support allows staff to reflect on how trauma can manifest in the children's presenting needs. As a result, staff build important connections with the children to support them in understanding how their past experiences may influence how they express their emotions when they are upset.

Staff know how to keep the children safe. They keep detailed records of the decisions that they have made to promote the children's safety. All staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme that helps to further develop their skills and knowledge, which directly benefits the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has not been present in the home for a substantial period, and an interim manager has provided support and stability during this time. The interim manager has extensive experience and knowledge of statutory children's services, and staff value the expertise that they have brought to the home.

Staff work well together and have a strong sense of team identity. Staff mostly feel well supported by the management team. Despite this, some staff have felt that their knowledge and understanding of the children's needs have not been fully appreciated by senior leaders when care planning decisions have been made. This has affected their confidence in the decision-making process.

Managers fail to learn lessons to improve practice. The management team has not engaged in formal learning or reflection on the reasons behind the unexpected departure of some children from the home. In addition, when learning reviews have been recommended through monitoring systems, these have not been carried out.

On several occasions, staff have not supported the children in accordance with their individual plans. For example, staff did not fully understand one child's body language, which delayed them using known strategies to help them calm down. The managers are aware of this. They have plans in place to support practice development and to improve the gathering of feedback following difficult incidents.

Several staff regularly access their work emails away from the home. There are no clear boundaries between staff's professional and personal lives. At times, this has influenced how staff decide to support the children. For example, some staff recognise that accessing work emails can lead them to make assumptions about the children's needs before they arrive at the home. Leaders and managers have not demonstrated sufficient oversight and management of this situation.

Staff have worked hard to adapt to a new recording system that has been implemented since the last inspection. The staff are continually developing their practice to ensure that they fully record the children's lives. This will enable the children to fully understand their experience of living in 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, 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iv)) In particular, the registered person must support staff in ensuring that children have a positive experience living in the home and that all their everyday needs are met. Children must be cared for in line with their individual plans, and the leadership team must take appropriate action when the care children receive does not meet their needs.	15 May 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	15 May 2025

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, the registered person must use monitoring systems to reflect on the experiences and progress of children living in the home, as well as demonstrate that appropriate learning and reflection take place when children move on from the home in an unplanned manner.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)) The registered person must do everything possible to ensure that all children have a positive and planned experience of moving on from the home. The registered person must ensure that a review of the suitability of the placement is carried out without delay if they are concerned that staff cannot meet	15 May 2025

children's needs or safely carry out the actions in their individualised plans.	
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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: 2508451

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Registered provider address: The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: Deborah Price

Registered manager: Nichola Meads

Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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