

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 run by a local authority and provides care for up to four children who experience social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties. At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

There has been no registered manager since September 2025.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2025	Full	Good
23/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All children have made good progress from their starting points, and the consistency of staff has helped children to build positive foundations. Due to this, children have developed an increased sense of stability and belonging since they moved to the home. As a result of staff demonstrating a good understanding of children's underlying needs, no child's placement has ended in an unplanned way since the last inspection.

Children feel listened to and heard, they actively seek support from staff to help them resolve their difficulties. Staff have encouraged children to explore their individual identities and value their uniqueness. Consequently, children are better able to regulate their feelings and emotions and know when they may need extra support.

Staff have carefully supported children's education, and for two children, this has been particularly effective, leading to improved outcomes for them. The team of staff are continuing to support two other children to attain positive educational goals, and this includes alternative education approaches where appropriate. All children have improved their engagement with education since moving to the home.

Children enjoy positive peer relationships with each other and frequently engage in a range of shared social activities. One social worker shared:

There has been significant improvement with the managing of challenging behaviour within the home. The matching process seems to have been improved, which in turn has allowed for a more settled environment for children.

There is strong aspiration across the staff team to ensure that children have positive and fulfilling lives, and that their backgrounds and experiences of coming into care are not barriers to this. For example, staff were united in holding an end of school prom for all the children, which they would not have otherwise been able to experience. This created a memorable event for all children, some of their family and the staff team.

Staff frequently act as mediators for children regarding their family relationships, which have at times been acrimonious and impacted on children's emotional well-being. The members of the staff team have worked well with children and their families to improve these relationships, and this will help children should they return to live in their birth families in the future. As a result, children also have improved understanding about the principles of healthy relationships.

There is a well embedded approach to supporting children to learn and develop the necessary skills and knowledge they will need in their adult lives. Staff take advantage of opportunities as they arise to support children to develop their self-care and independence skills. One child has been able to benefit from an increasingly independent lifestyle, without the pressure of having to do this alone.

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

Children's presenting risks are well understood and due to the positive relationships between staff and children, staff instinctively know when children need extra help. Children can identify preferred adults who work in the home and have developed a strong sense of trust towards these individual staff. In addition, children are confident in the capacity of staff to help them through difficult experiences and life events.

When challenging situations arise, most of the time staff think carefully about how they can best support children to resolve their problems. Instinctive actions taken by staff mean that children are kept safe within the home, and children frequently seek one-to-one time with staff. For example, one staff member carefully supported a child to move away from an unsafe environment in the home due to smashed glass, which then created an opportunity for a sensitive and empathetic conversation that helped this child to calm down.

Staff use a range of resources to engage children in protective conversations and encourage them to make positive choices. Well-established communication channels across the home mean that staff respond with consistency and there is a shared understanding about the best approaches to help children. Staff understand the risks that children may be exposed to while in the community, and support children to increase their safety when outside of the home.

Staff work well with several professionals to promote children's welfare and carefully manage known risks. Professional feedback from a recent multi-disciplinary meeting regarding one child's missing episodes, reflected that these have reduced since the child moved into the home. Staff have helped this child to have improved understanding of their online safety and risks presented by unknown adults. This has coincided with improved progress for this child across several areas of their life.

Diversity across the staff team helps children to benefit from different roles models, and children confidently seek support from staff irrespective of their individual characteristics about a wide range of topics, such as contraception, mental health and identity. In these situations, staff use professional curiosity to engage children in further conversations about their safety and well-being. This helps children to make better-informed decisions and consider differing perspectives.

Despite otherwise good practice, there have been some examples of insensitive comments towards children, and staff not responding in a professional and empathetic manner. Leaders and managers are progressing plans to support further training and development for staff in this area.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is currently without a registered manager. The interim home manager, who has previously covered this position for a substantial period, has applied for the permanent position. This has been a popular decision among staff. A new deputy manager has recently been appointed in the home. Despite intermittent management arrangements, the members of the staff team have remained unaffected, and this reflects the positive working relationships across the team, and the shared focus on creating the right environment for children.

The members of the newly established management team have substantial knowledge and skills that are well matched to helping both staff and children. Staff recognise how this may benefit them, one staff member shared, 'This will be a really good management team.' The home manager has a clear vision and has a number of ideas that will help to enhance staff knowledge and improve their understanding of children's experiences of coming into care.

The home manager and responsible individual have significant background experience in statutory social work, relevant to children living in care. This means they have well-informed perspectives about what is required to progress children's plans, and as a result, there is increased focus on outcomes and experiences for children. The impact of this is that staff have an improved understanding of wider statutory responsibilities, and this means that they are better prepared to help children.

Leaders and managers understand what is required to help children live together in a positive and harmonious manner. Children's needs have been carefully contrasted, and consequently, they are able to live together in mutually accepting way. There have been no children move on from the home since the last inspection, which reflects that children are well suited to living together. Effective action has been taken to consider the experiences and feedback of children who have previously lived in the home.

All staff receive bespoke training in local authority's preferred approach, which aspires to help staff to be increasingly emotionally warm and understand the connections between children's early life experiences and the impact this may have on their support needs. Monthly therapeutic consultations form a fundamental part of this approach, providing an opportunity for staff to reflect on children's progress and think about alternative strategies and ways of helping children as needed.

Staff make good use of team meetings to reflect on their care of children, and this also provides some informal monitoring to ensure that staff are carrying out the responsibilities and tasks required of them. This is further supported by consistent supervision for staff. The manager and senior staff have shared responsibility for managing supervision arrangements, and this ensures that there are appropriate levels of delegation and responsibility embedded into the staff team.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have the skills to respond to children's needs in a positive and constructive manner that demonstrates staff are attuned to children's emotional presentation. The registered manager should also ensure that all staff are mindful of the impact of their own feelings on children and that staff react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.14)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: Post vacant

Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked-after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025