

2508451

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 22 July 2020.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
15/08/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Poor information-sharing when a child was moving into the home meant that staff were not supported with strategies to care effectively for the child. As a result, staff struggled to keep the child safe. Subsequently, the child moved on in an unplanned way.

There has been a significant impact on one child living in the home of two others moving in. This has led to an increase in one child's episodes of going missing, substance misuse and criminal activities. Both children moved in without careful or considered planning, due to emergency caring arrangements. For example, there were no placement planning meetings held for the children despite continued requests from the registered manager. For one child, their suitability assessment for moving into the home was completed after they had arrived. This lack of planning for the children has contributed towards a period of instability in the children's home.

Despite difficulties, two children are making significant progress from their starting points. For one child, there has been a decrease in behaviours that challenge the staff and promising engagement in education and life-story work for the first time. The staff have made plans to enrol the child into a dance academy, motivated by the child's wishes and feelings.

Senior leaders had planned to decorate the upstairs landing and some of the children's bedrooms. However, plans were delayed due to a child testing positive for COVID-19. This work, which is needed to make the home feel welcoming and cosy, was due to start a couple of weeks after this inspection. The children's bedrooms are clean and safe, and the children told the inspector they had everything they need to feel comfortable. However, there is no appropriate storage for the children's suitcases once they have unpacked. This does not contribute to a sense of belonging or permanency for the children, especially for those children who have moved several times before living in this home.

Senior leaders and the staff understand the importance of education for the children. The registered manager is piloting a new educational resource provided by the local authority. This is additional to the children's agreed education plans, with a focus on engaging the children in tailored activities and learning opportunities. One child has positively engaged with a reading challenge, while another child is requesting practical elements in supporting their maths and English studies. While this is still in its early stages, the children spoke encouragingly of the support they had received so far.

One child is attending their place of education on a full-time basis. They are invested in their schoolwork and extra-curricular activities such as playing in the school's steel

pan orchestra. These enriching opportunities are fully supported by the staff team and are further encouraged by the staff attending local music and dance festivals with the children. This supports the children's passions and vocations, and helps the staff build positive relationships with the children.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There has been a significant increase in serious incidents being notified to Ofsted. On occasion, these notifications have been late and, on one occasion, the staff and registered manager did not respond to a child's allegation appropriately. This was noticed by the home's quality assurance manager and referred to the relevant agencies eight weeks later. Although this omission has not impacted on the quality of care provided to the children, it does have the potential to hinder good and immediate safeguarding practices.

The staff carry out regular bedroom searches when they feel the children are concealing something that might be unsafe. Sometimes these searches happen when the children are out of the home, due to immediate concerns. However, the staff's record-keeping for these searches does not reflect good practice. For example, records do not contain the necessary information, such as the reasons for these searches, the efforts to seek the children's consent, or management oversight of the decision to carry out the search. Without this in place, there is a potential for the children to feel that their dignity and privacy is not respected by the staff.

Some of the newly recruited staff do not have all the necessary skills, experience or training to support the individual needs of the children. One training course has been identified, and staff were planning to attend this course in July. However, on one occasion, a member of staff was unable to successfully manage a behavioural incident between two children, resulting in one child being harmed. The manager was quick to identify the learning outcomes from this, and immediately shared this with the team. The children's risk assessments were updated to reflect the outcomes and, as a result, there have been no further incidents of this nature between these two children.

The staff make good use of on-call arrangements and seek further support when they feel more help is needed to keep the children safe. The registered manager is working hard with allocated social workers to ensure that friendships and family arrangements are safe and in the best interests of children. However, on one occasion, the staff did not make the appropriate arrangements to support a child following their arrest in the home. For example, the child was not supported with a familiar adult. This had the potential to fail to fulfil the children's rights and entitlements when they were suspected of a criminal offence.

The registered manager has devised good risk assessments that include strategies for the staff to follow in keeping the children safe. These are regularly reviewed and updated with new approaches for the staff to follow and new risk rating levels when needed. This demonstrates how the children's risk assessments are addressing

known and rising vulnerabilities effectively after incidents occur. However, an internet safety risk for one child, which was documented by a member of staff after conversations with the child, has not been highlighted or transferred into the child's risk management plan. Therefore, there are no strategies for the staff to follow in minimising this emerging risk for the child.

The registered manager has written clear behaviour support strategies, with the children, that directly link into their risk management plans. This joined-up working gives the staff good guidance and consistency in supporting the children's holistic needs. The use of signposting in this document to other plans further guides the staff in helping to ensure all information for the children is known and understood.

The registered manager understands their responsibilities in good safer recruitment practices for new staff. This means that the children are more likely to be cared for by safe and appropriate adults.

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

The registered manager has not sourced two of the children's education, health and care plans. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that relevant information is known and shared with the staff team. Although the staff are aware of the current education plans for the children, they are not aware of the children's individual targets or teaching tools. For children who are not attending school regularly, this is a missed opportunity for the staff to tailor individualised learning, suited to the needs and abilities of the children.

On two occasions, it is recorded that monetary sanctions have been used with one child when they returned in a taxi following being missing from home. It is not clear from these records how much money the child has been asked to contribute and for what reasons. This type of sanction is not agreed in the child's plans or with managerial oversight. This type of record-keeping has the potential to suggest the children are at risk of financial mistreatment by the staff.

The registered manager was quick to listen to a child when they felt a member of staff had spoken to them inappropriately. This was documented as a child's complaint, and they were supported to understand the process and complete the necessary paperwork. However, it is not clear how the child felt about the outcome of their complaint. This is a missed opportunity for the registered manager to demonstrate that the child's concerns had been addressed and resolved.

The staff say they are fully supported by the registered and deputy managers. They say they are approachable, they listen and spend quality time with the children. The staff receive regular and reflective supervision, allowing them time to discuss the children's behaviours and highlight their concerns. Managers frequently discuss the staff's professional development, ensuring any goals or targets are reviewed and, if needed, carried forward into further supervisions or team meetings. This approach helps with the sharing of information and keeps track of agreed actions.

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, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; 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; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d))	1 September 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person and	1 September 2022

are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vii))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)(h))	1 September 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	1 September 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's bedrooms should not generally be entered without their permission, though it may be necessary to establish routines to allow for rooms to be cleaned regularly. Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered manager should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('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: 2508451

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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: Nichola Meads

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

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