

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033174
Inspector	Stephen Collett
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Hampshire County Council
Registered person address	Hampshire County Council The Castle WINCHESTER Hampshire SO23 8ZB
Responsible individual	Susan Lomax
Registered manager	Maria Kathleen Jane Calway-Kennedy
Date of last inspection	28/11/2014

Inspection date	12/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

At the last full inspection in November 2014 the home was judged to be good for overall effectiveness. One requirement and three recommendations were made in order to further improve practice at the home. During the intervening period the home has sustained this level of overall effectiveness, despite facing a number of challenges.

Young people at the home have a diverse range of needs and some require high levels of staff support and supervision. All the young people have experienced significant disruption in their lives which has impacted negatively on their development, and consequently some of the young people engage in risky and unsafe behaviours. Staff support young people to address these issues and maintain consistent boundaries in an often challenging environment.

The requirement made at the last inspection to review sanctions and ensure they do not solely focus on financial penalties has been met. This review has concluded that for some young people the imposition of financial penalties remains an effective intervention, while other young people now get some choice over what sanction will be imposed. In addition, alternative sanctions have been identified which can be imposed for inappropriate behaviour.

The recommendation relating to young people having their views on sanctions recorded has not been acted upon, and although the home's records indicate that young people are asked to sign when they receive a sanction, the record does not have a section for their views to be recorded.

The use of alarms on bedroom doors has been reviewed, and all young people now have a risk assessment which considers whether this is an appropriate measure. These risk assessments are reviewed and the safety of individual young people is

taken into account when deciding whether bedroom door alarms should be activated.

Although young people are not yet effectively contributing towards staff annual appraisals, the provider is in consultation as to how this might be achieved. The home has recently introduced 'have your say' consultation forms for young people, so that they can express their views on the care they receive. The Deputy Manager at the home explained that the use of these may be expanded so that they become a tool for young people to contribute towards staff annual appraisals.

Young people make reasonable progress at the home and all attend education. For other young people it has been identified that the home will not meet their long term needs, and so progress has been limited. However, during their stay work has been undertaken to ensure that their needs have been comprehensively assessed so that alternative provision can be made. Other young people have seen improvements in family relationships, and in one case this has resulted in plans being made for the young person to return to the care of family.

Young people express mixed views on the quality of care they receive. Some are very positive, while others report that staff do not manage conflict between young people well, impose unfair sanctions and show a lack of compassion for young people who self-harm. However, all young people then went on to describe good qualities that many of the staff have. The deputy manager provided detailed explanations and evidence to show that young people do receive consistent good levels of care. A social worker commented that 'staff go over and above' to meet young people's needs.

Although young people do have opportunities to express their views on the quality of care they receive, the current mechanisms for achieving this - young people's meetings and 'have your say' consultation forms, are not an effective way of ensuring young people feel their views are being heard. Young people are not familiar with how to access an independent advocacy service in order to address the current situation.

Management, staff and young people acknowledge that there are some concerns regarding bullying amongst the residents. There is an anti-bullying development plan in place to address this issue, and a member of staff has been identified to take this forward.

Staff are familiar with the risks young people face when they go missing from the home and take pro-active steps to reduce missing episodes. All young people have missing person risk assessments and staff follow agreed protocols and procedures when young people go missing. Following a young person's return from a missing episode, staff record any information young people might give about the circumstances of the event, but this is not always recorded in sufficient detail, and there are no formally agreed arrangements for conducting independent return home

interviews when young people return.

Management liaise closely with relevant professionals regarding child protection concerns, ensuring these are appropriately investigated. Strategies are also put in place to ensure young people are protected and kept safe from harm. However, there is a shortfall in the standard of record keeping relating to child protection concerns as no running record is kept of actions taken following a young person making a disclosure.

Individual behaviour management strategies are in place for young people which are based on incentives and rewarding positive behaviour. Physical restraint is used as a last resort and in accordance with regulatory guidelines. Staff receive appropriate training to manage these situations. Young people are given the opportunity to discuss these incidents, but are not consistently given the opportunity to have a medical examination following a restraint.

Managers maintain good communication with external agencies to ensure that young people's needs are appropriately assessed and that steps are taken to protect their welfare. Staff feel supported and new staff benefit from undertaking an induction process that prepares them for undertaking direct work with young people. Regular visits take place in accordance with regulation 33 and reports highlight areas for development. However, regulation 34 monitoring reports are not completed within appropriate timescales and submitted to Ofsted.

As a result of this inspection two requirements and four recommendations are made to develop and improve practice at the home.

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to five children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/11/2014	Full	good
13/02/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
13/06/2013	Full	good
29/01/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
16 (2001)	ensure written records are kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response; specifically, ensure all information relating to an investigation is logged and collated in chronological order (Regulation 16 (2) (d))	30/04/2015
34 (2001)	supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted for the purposes of paragraph (1); specifically, ensure monitoring reports are submitted at least once in every 3 months. (Regulation 34 (2))	30/04/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children do not identify bullying as problem at the home (NMS 3.11)
- ensure children know their rights to advocacy and how to access an advocate (NMS 1.5)
- ensure written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of those reasons; specifically, ensure records are kept of independent return home interviews (NMS 5.10)
- ensure that where there has been a physical restraint, children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner. (NMS 3.16)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.