

# SC033174

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## 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 who have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has been registered since 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 20 to 21 August 2018

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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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:** 5 September 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 05/09/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 21/11/2016      | Full            | Good                    |
| 29/03/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 10/11/2015      | 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   |
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| <p>The care planning standard</p> <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that, where possible, the plans for emergency placements are arranged in a way that minimises the impact on the young people already living in the home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 31/12/2018 |
| <p>The care planning standard</p> <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(a))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that sufficient referral information is made available to the home to assist the registered manager with the completion of risk assessments and placement decision-making.</p> | 31/12/2018 |
| <p>The care planning standard</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 31/12/2018 |

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| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the child’s placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child’s relevant plans is requested, if—</p> <p>the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child’s needs; (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(e)(i))</p> <p>In particular, leaders must ensure that there is a timely response when the registered manager makes a request for a review of any young person’s placement plan.</p> |                   |
| <p>Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being.</p> <p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person’s report to—</p> <p>HMCI. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b)(7)(a))</p> <p>In particular, the independent person must send the report to HMCI.</p>                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>31/12/2018</p> |
| <p>Other records</p> <p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(1)(2)(a)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>31/12/2018</p> |

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| In particular, the registered person must ensure that all entries in the register of children are complete. |  |
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## Recommendations

- Children's homes should be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of the children. They will in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).

In particular, the home's extensive outside space would benefit from regular garden maintenance.

- The children's home must produce a children's guide. The children's guide should help children to understand: how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraphs 4.21 and 4.22).

In particular, the home must identify a named advocacy service for the young people.

- Regulation 35 requires each home to prepare and implement a behaviour management policy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.33).

In particular, young people should be encouraged to sign their acknowledgment for any personal sanction or consequence as a result of the home's application of the behaviour management strategy.

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, the young people and staff team have experienced a disruptive and challenging period. The local authority's decision to place young people in the home on an emergency basis, with limited referral information being made available to the registered manager, impacted negatively on the young people already living in the home.

As a result of these challenges, the young people resident during this time told the inspector that they felt 'scared' and 'anxious'. Some activities were cancelled because of the disruption in the home. The registered manager reported that the high level of

incidents left the staff team feeling 'vulnerable and intimidated'.

The two young people admitted to the home on an emergency basis have since moved on from the home. Young people currently living in the home described it as 'calmer now'.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities suited to their individual preferences, alongside group requests. These include cultural cooking themes, visits to activity centres and popular local tourist attractions. With staff supervision, young people also benefit from planned holiday activities such as camping trips and holidays abroad.

Staff have high aspirations for young people in the home, and make progress. Examples include a reduction in young people's missing-from-home episodes and their increased attendance at school. Young people completed their end-of-year exams, and plans are in place for them to engage in further education and volunteering. This helps to increase young people's skills and confidence.

Young people value their home and develop trusting relationships with the staff team. The atmosphere in the home is similar to that of a family home. Personalised bedrooms, 'everyday' conversations about the weather and young people requesting playtime with the staff's dogs enhance the homely atmosphere.

Despite this, the large outside area and gardens surrounding the home are poorly maintained, with overgrown shrubs and limited garden furniture. This limits young people's opportunities to spend time outside during the warmer months of the year.

Young people participate in age-appropriate independence skills training. Household chores such as personal laundry and tidying bedrooms, alongside independent travel to college and budgeting skills, help prepare young people for when they move on to independent living.

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

Since the last inspection, young people have experienced an unsettled time in the home. Emergency placements impacted on the young people's routines and emotional well-being. A young person said, 'I feel safe now that [X] has gone', and another young person said, 'Why should we have to put up with that violence in our home?'

A consultant child psychologist reported that, due to the experiences in the home at that time, a young person became severely anxious, felt sick at school and worried about going back to the home at night. The consultant psychologist added, 'I am worried about the impact on the emotional state of the young people in the home.' Staff have discussed the young people's concerns with them, both informally and during their regular key-working sessions.

The registered manager utilises detailed pre-placement impact risk assessments effectively to inform appropriate placement matching. In general, the needs of young people already living in the home are prioritised and unsuitable referrals are declined. However, there have been occasions when the registered manager has not received

detailed pre-placement information. This resulted in young people being admitted to the home whose care and support needs could not be met by staff.

Positive behaviour is encouraged in the home. Young people receive a financial incentive to attend school, alongside the effective use of a 'praise points' reward system.

The use of sanctions is appropriate. Restorative approaches, such as young people making a financial contribution towards repairing the damage they have caused or by writing apology letters, are encouraged. However, young people do not consistently sign these records to acknowledge the sanctions.

Staff help young people to contribute to their placement reviews. If young people wish to challenge their placement plan, staff successfully encourage young people to write letters to their independent reviewing officer. Young people also have access to an independent advocacy service, although the young people's guide does not provide the contact details of the service.

Staff help young people to keep themselves safe. Key-work sessions address the risks of substance misuse or going missing from the home. Young people undertake an internet safety 'exam' before they can access the home's computer. The home has good links with the local police. Police community support officers visit the home on an informal basis. This helps encourage positive relationships with the young people.

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

The registered manager has many years' experience in young people's residential care. A knowledgeable practitioner, she has a detailed understanding of the strengths of the home, and of its opportunities. However, the senior management team has placed young people in the home without detailed referral information, or contrary to the registered manager's recommendations. This has had a negative emotional impact on the young people in the home and the staff team morale.

The registered manager recognises that the events of the preceding months have had a negative impact on young people in the home. The registered manager reported her concerns to the senior management team but there was a significant delay in identifying alternative provision for the young people placed on an emergency basis. Because of the delay, young people continued to be at risk of emotional harm.

The home receives monthly monitoring visits from an independent person, as required. However, the independent person's reports do not provide an opinion as to whether young people are safeguarded effectively and whether the conduct of the home is promoting their well-being. Moreover, HMCI does not receive these reports in a timely manner.

Staff spoken with described the registered manager as 'empowering', 'uplifting' and 'positive'. Staff praised the 'very effective support' and advocacy that the registered manager provided to the team during the challenges of the previous months. Group supervision, combined with opportunities for reflection, enhances the staff team's commitment to the home, each other and the young people.

The registered manager actively promotes staff's learning opportunities. Staff undertake a comprehensive range of training, and all staff are either qualified to the appropriate level 3 qualification or are currently undertaking the course. Training is enriched with staff opportunities to visit good and outstanding children's homes, observe good practice and share learning with the staff team at the home.

Staff work together effectively to provide care that meets the individual needs of the young people. Staff ensure that shift planning is comprehensive, which helps to provide young people with seamless and dynamic care. The home's consultant psychologist attends team meetings and provides staff with additional strategies and advice that help to tailor the young people's individual care and support.

## **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:** SC033174

**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:** Sarah Harris

## Inspector

Victoria Jones, social care inspector

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