

SC033174

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 is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children aged between 10 and 17; 16 is the maximum age on admission. According to the home's statement of purpose, it offers residential care with therapeutic emphasis and multiagency involvement, to help children to recover from experiences which have rendered them vulnerable and disrupted their primary relationships. There are currently three children living in the home.

The registered manager post is currently vacant.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 16 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 April 2021

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 30 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children continue to make progress and staff remain committed to the recent improvements made in the home. The action plan for the home's development and progress remains in force and is being completed in collaboration with children, staff and senior leaders. For example, a current focus is how to improve the home's presentation, including the garden area, to enable children to be even more involved in improving the home. This has generated interest and excitement. The children are looking forward to the summer so that they can enjoy activities outside.

Committed and enthusiastic staff know the children well. This means that the children are developing trusting and secure relationships. As a result, children are better able to discuss their feelings and worries. Children have continued to experience improved relationships with each other and staff. The acting manager is assertive and proactive in addressing issues in the home.

Children attend a range of educational provisions and are making progress. Staff motivate, encourage and advocate for the children attending education. For example, one child asked to change courses at college. Staff ensured that the child's views and wishes were heard and acted on. This meant that the child was able to change courses and is looking forward to returning to education.

Staff recognise the diverse needs of the children. Key workers seek appropriate resources and information to support each child's individual personality and identity. Acceptance of each other is encouraged by staff and managers. However, key-work sessions with children are sporadic and, on occasion, lack focus and omit clarity regarding the aim of the session. For example, if a session is generic, the child may have to repeat discussions with another member of staff, causing frustration and anxiety for the child.

Staff ensure that any damage to the home, or required maintenance tasks, are completed in a timely way. Children are much more settled in the home. As a result, incidents in the home have decreased and, as such, damage to the home has reduced.

Children are generally in good health and encouraged by staff to attend appointments. Nonetheless, there have been occasions when children have not attended specialist appointments. This is due to a lack of staff oversight and organisation. Managers are implementing a more robust system to ensure that the health and well-being needs of children are met.

Children do not always eat together despite the encouragement from staff to do so. Staff ensure that children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. For example, staff support children to prepare food and have informal discussions around healthy choices and the benefits of a varied diet. Staff also discuss budgeting and other key life skills. As a result, children are supported when moving on to independence.

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

Children's behaviour, and the reasons for this, are known and understood by staff. There is clarity on the use of restraint, and police intervention for serious incidents, when this is necessary. Restraint is only used when all other diversionary tactics have been attempted. Staff support children following any incident.

However, the management of children's behaviour is not always consistent. There is a lack of authority and confidence by some staff in managing incidents. For example, when less experienced staff are on shift together there are inconsistent approaches and an anxiety about establishing positive boundaries with children.

Children are treated with dignity and respect. A complaint from a child against a member of staff following an incident was upheld by the manager. As a result, the child felt supported and listened to. This shows the children that their emotional well-being is important to staff, that they are listened to and taken seriously. One child told the inspector that, although they are moving on, they would also be fine if they had to stay. They were happy and said that staff helped them.

Staff promote children's safety. When children leave the home without discussing their plans or where they are going, staff are alert to the potential risks and ensure that there is urgent action. However, actions taken when a child returns are not always consistent. For example, a child trying to bring alcohol into the home was not managed confidently or systematically. This is further compounded by staff allowing evidence of alcohol consumption or substance misuse to be on show in a child's bedroom. This is confusing and gives inconsistent and inappropriate age-related messages to the child.

Communication with police, social workers and other professionals is good. This has improved the safety and protection for the children and improved the safeguarding of a particular child who was at increased risk of harm. Information recorded in the home's records provides good oversight of the care planning for children. Children's voices are also well documented in the home's records, and staff ensure that all statutory review documentation, and other required records, is kept up to date. This means that there is good oversight of progress and a clear record of any emerging concerns.

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

The home is currently managed by an acting manager who has applied for registration. She shows warmth and care for the children. The children have recognised the collective and collaborative approach by staff, stating that the staff work together more. Expectations are consistent and shared via the updated action plan, which is available to staff and closely monitored by senior managers. Learning from incidents is shared openly via team meetings and discussions. The management team addresses all matters of concern thoroughly. This is reflected in

reviews and investigation reports seen on inspection. Recommendations from the independent visitor are acknowledged and acted on.

Senior leaders and the manager have worked effectively as a team, resulting in a successful recruitment drive. Most of the vacant staffing positions are now filled. The current staff team is, overall, strong, providing stability for the children. Senior managers and the acting manager have acted on learning from previous changes. Professional development and training has been reviewed by managers and appropriate action has been taken to provide support where required to continue building on a strong team. Children are now cared for by a more stable, consistent and better-skilled staff team.

The oversight and quality assurance processes are not yet good enough. Some processes lack clear expectations for staff and, consequently, there can be variable quality. The manager is working hard to embed improvements in daily practice. There is delay at times in reporting significant events to Ofsted. These relate to the welfare and protection of the children. However, staff take all necessary action following an incident or disclosure.

A new member of staff told the inspector they felt supported and welcomed by the team. Frequent and thorough review of induction requires improvement so that the individual support needs of staff can be identified. Currently, senior staff are not able to recognise where additional support may be required. However, all staff receive regular supervision. This varies in reflection, challenge and discussion relating to staff development.

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
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)) In particular, ensure that children are supported to attend all physical and mental health appointments to promote good health, a positive lifestyle and strategies to improve their well-being.	31 August 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(v))	31 August 2021

In particular, ensure that staff complete regular, focused, transparent and measurable key-working sessions with children.	
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; 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; 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)(f)(h))	31 August 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. For example, all staff to have a consistent and focused agenda which includes reflection of their practice and professional development. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC033174

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Hampshire Council, 3rd Floor, Elizabeth II Court North, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector

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