

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033174
Inspector	Jennie Christopher
Type of inspection	Full
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	13/02/2014

Inspection date	28/11/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people make good progress while living in the home. They experience mostly warm and caring relationships with staff. Young people feel listened to and there is an improved approach to consultation. Ad hoc group meetings, meal time discussions and weekly questionnaires ensure young people are able to share their views and effect change within the home.

Young people are helped to learn the foundations to form positive relationships with staff and each other in a supportive environment. Young people's demeanour shows they are comfortable in the environment and they approach staff with any worries or concerns. They feel staff are concerned for their wellbeing and support them to work through problems. Staff form robust working relationships with parents, teachers and work with a range of specialist services to promote consistency in care planning and to improve outcomes for young people.

The Registered Manager, who replaced a long established leader, recognises the strengths and weaknesses within the home. She has many ideas to improve the service for young people and has identified areas for improvement in care and the physical environment through a comprehensive development plan. Staff say they have access to a wide range of training opportunities and are supported through regular supervision. There have been changes within the staff team, however, young

people continue to benefit from a consist approach to care.

Areas identified as requiring improvement as a result of this inspection include:
reviewing the use of financial sanctions to ensure they are effective; regularly
reviewing the use of bedroom door alarms; consistently recording young people's
views in sanctions records and gaining young people's views for staff appraisals.

Full report

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
13/02/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
13/06/2013	Full	good
29/01/2013	Interim	good progress
10/07/2012	Full	good

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
17 (2001)	review sanctions to ensure they are appropriate and do not solely focus on the imposition of financial penalties, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation or withholding money (Regulation 17(2)(g))	16/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- where physical restrictions on normal movement within the home are deemed necessary to safeguard children and promote their welfare and development; ensure the use of these measures is regularly reviewed. This is with specific regard to discreet alarms on bedroom doors (NMS 10.4)
- ensure staff appraisals take into account any views of children the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Outcomes for young people are good. Young people learn to develop an increased positive self-view and understanding of their personal history. Emotional wellbeing is central to young people's plans with some excellent support from external mental health professionals. Additionally many staff have completed a diploma in a specific therapeutic approach to further enhance individual's positive emotional health.

Young people enjoy good physical health and staff confidently support individuals to understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyles for them. Meals are mostly homemade, with a focus on healthy eating. On occasion, young people cook for themselves or for the group to improve their independent skills. Young people are involved in a range of physically and emotionally stimulating activities in the home and community, such as arts and crafts, pamper evenings and various sporting activities.

Young people are supported to make decisions about their lives and the content of their care plans. Young people make a positive contribution within the home through ad hoc house meetings an individual sessions. Recently implemented weekly key work questionnaires provide a further opportunity for young people to share their views.

Education is tailored to individual needs. Young people all attend formal education in relation to their learning and social requirements. Those who struggle to maintain a full timetable are involved in various activities with staff. These include short accredited courses such as making a bed, keeping safe and meal preparation. Staff and managers are questioning the appropriateness of one young person's placement due to their learning disability. Their outcomes have improved since living in the home, but it is not clear if this is sustainable.

Young people have excellent support to learn skills for independence and adulthood. Individualised plans ensure young people are able to budget and make meals in addition to gaining skills for everyday issues, such as completing forms and applying for jobs. A young person who was moving to independence during the inspection was extremely positive about the support they had and staff were helping them clean and move into their new home.

Quality of care **good**

The quality of care for young people is good. Young people enjoy some excellent relationships with staff and appear comfortable in their company. Staff are demonstrably concerned for all aspects of individual's wellbeing. Observations

highlight staffs positive communication skills, ensuring all young people are listened to and are able to share their views. Staff effectively explain to young people when their views and wishes cannot be acted upon and the reasons why. Young people's complaints are responded to promptly and it is clear their contributions are welcomed.

Young people contribute to their reviews and care plans, which reflect agreed decisions and future targets. Individualised behaviour management plans promote consistency in approach to unwanted behaviour. Sanctions are mostly fair and proportionate. However, financial penalties are not always effective or reflective of the individuals understanding and concept of the value of money. Records do not always contain young people's views on the sanction imposed. Positive behaviour is rewarded in ways appropriate to individual young people, including earning extra money towards trips out or items of their choice.

Staff support young people with their education through close liaison with education professionals. Therefore, young people benefit from continuity in approach to reach their goals and succeed. The link teacher at a local school was extremely complimentary of the home and staff support for young people's education. As a result, individuals are able to succeed in line with their peers and prepare for their next education placements.

Individual emotional and physical health needs are met through consultation with specialist health professionals. Young people are supported to engage in physical activities around the home from sports to walks in the local community. There is a number of staff with first aid qualifications in the building at all times in case of emergency.

Staff support and when appropriate, facilitate agreed contact with family and significant other people. They liaise effectively with parents, carers and social workers to ensure contact remains beneficial to young people.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The home is good at keeping young people safe. Young people say they feel safe in the home and their demeanour suggests they are comfortable in their environment. All young people are able to identify staff they would go to if they are worried or upset. Staff are clear on processes to follow should they be concerned for a young person's safety or welfare. They understand each young person's vulnerabilities and work proactively to protect them. Bullying is a concern within the home, however, issues within the group are challenged promptly and proactively.

Policies within the home are updated by the organisation in response to lessons learned locally and nationally. They include identifying signs of exploitation and gang affiliation. Safeguarding investigations are managed promptly and in line with local

procedures. The Local Authority Designated Officer commented they have no current concerns regarding the home.

Young people do go missing from care on occasion. If young people leave the home without permission, staff search the local area for them, and attempt to contact them by mobile phone. Strong links in the community result in the home being made aware of individual's whereabouts should they be in the village. Staff are aware of the factors that may lead to a young person going missing and work proactively to engage individuals to prevent this happening. Those at risk of exploitation are referred for specialist support from a national charity. Staff complement this work with continued discussion regarding keeping safe and appropriate and healthy relationships.

Behaviours that place young people at risk, such as offending, are well managed. The deputy manager worked tirelessly to ensure a young person was not charged with assault, as their emotional ability and understanding did not warrant the case being progressed. Specialist police officers are positive about the home's support of young people and local officers regularly drop in to chat with young people. Individual files contain up-to-date photographs of young people in case of emergency. Young people's risk assessments are robust, ensuring they are able to take age-appropriate risks in line with their abilities and vulnerabilities.

Positive behaviour plans focus on de-escalation and support for individuals in times of emotional crisis or anger. As a result restraint is seldom used and only as a last resort. A recent admission to the home has led to a spike in incidents, but staff are working effectively with the young person to reduce the numbers of restraints. Young people are encouraged to consider how future responses could be different, with staff facilitating reflective discussions.

Young people are safe from fire and other hazards as a result of regular checks and procedures. The use of alarms on bedroom doors has not been risk assessed individually to ensure alarms do not restrict movement while considering safety. The organisation's recruitment policy is thorough, including robust personnel checks.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The home manager was registered in April 2014. She has suitable qualifications to manage the home effectively. Her background in both youth support services and social care underpins an outstanding approach to moving the service forwards and excellent leadership and management. The Registered Manager has a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses within the service. Young people have an increased voice in the running of the home and staff have renewed energy in their support for young people. The recently appointed deputy, who has many years' experience in the home, complements the management team and deputises effectively in the manager's absence.

Reports in relation to independent visits made to the home to monitor its conduct in line with Regulation 33 are sound. The newly appointed visitor is currently experimenting with styles of reports and has a clear focus on gaining young people's views. Evaluative monthly monitoring of the building and records highlight progress and any new areas of concern. The comprehensive development plan is reflective of any areas noted for improvement, and is clear in its objectives and how these will be met.

The Statement of Purpose is individualised to the home and reflects the service provided in house and by the local authority. Staff have a good understanding of the aims and ethos of the home and their role in caring for young people. The young people's guide is in a simple format which can be easily adapted. The booklet contains information on both internal and external advice and advocacy services. Plans are in place to update the guide to a DVD, including a virtual tour of the home.

Multi-agency working is entrenched in the home's practice. Close working relationships with specialist emotional wellbeing services, the looked after children's nurse and education services in particular, promote positive outcomes for young people. Services that are not performing are challenged as appropriate. There have been no complaints regarding the home from the local community and young people have a positive presence in the village.

There have been some recent changes to the staff team, but there remains a consistent core. New staff have brought a renewed zest to caring for young people and the team appears energised as a result. New staff have varying social care backgrounds and complement the skill set. This has increased staff understanding of differing behavioural and emotional needs and improved quality of experiences for young people on the autistic spectrum.

Staff feel they are supported by the management team and say they receive the training they require to complete their jobs effectively. The training calendar for the year includes both mandatory and additional training. Supervision of staff is regular and provides excellent challenge to continually improve practice. Annual appraisals do not currently include the thoughts of young people, but do identify training needs for the coming year. Newly appointed staff complete an induction programme specific to the service, based on the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.