

SC033174

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Interim 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 multi-agency involvement, to help children recover from experiences which have rendered them vulnerable and disrupted from their primary relationships.

Inspection date: 31 October 2019

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 14 May 2019

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

Children enjoy the care and attention of a staff team that openly displays warmth and affection for them. Staff show a strong interest in all aspects of the children's daily experiences, special events and overall well-being and progress.

Staff provide nurture and support to the children in the home, and encourage their participation in community activities outside of the home. For one child, this involves attending a work experience placement. This community-based activity helps develop the children's confidence, and helps prepare them for their futures.

Leaders and the registered manager have addressed the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. Improved measures around the staff's monitoring of the children's social media and television access ensures age-appropriate online safeguarding.

The registered manager has an up-to-date system for monitoring staff training. This ensures that the staff have completed the organisation's required training within the expected timescale. New learning is supported through professional discussions and analysis of practice. Careful recruitment processes provide an added layer of protection for the children.

Established multi-agency relationships help the staff provide holistic, child-centred care. Joined-up risk assessment and safety management plans help to ensure that risks are minimised. Staff have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe.

Staff are thoughtful about the transitions and adjustments that the children need to make, and events that can be difficult for them, such as review meetings. They plan and prepare the children for these meetings, and help them to express their views and wishes.

The culture is in keeping with a family home. Children learn how to live with others and share adult attention. Children are confident and develop a positive sense of who they are, while being able to act out their anxieties and process their history in a safe environment.

The home provides plenty of space and resources for the children. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their preferences and tastes. However, one child's bedroom was found to be very untidy, with no curtains hung up. A recommendation has been made for the registered manager to ensure that all bedrooms are maintained to a consistent high standard.

The registered manager considers referrals to the home, and the impact that new admissions may have on the children living in the home. On one occasion, senior leaders in the local authority overruled her decision not to admit a child in an emergency on the grounds of compatibility with others in the home. This decision compromised her ability to make admissions decisions in the best interests of the current group of children. This resulted in considerable instability for the other children in the home, and a disrupted ending for the child who had joined the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/09/2017	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
In particular, managers should ensure they take full account of impact assessments before making a placement to the home.
- Many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context. Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day to day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
In particular, ensure that all the children's bedrooms are kept to a reasonable standard of tidiness, and that curtains are hung up.

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Sarah Harris

Inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, social care inspector

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