

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC037588
Inspector	Bridget Goddard
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Portsmouth City Council
Registered person address	Portsmouth City Council Civic Offices, Guildhall Square PORTSMOUTH PO1 2BG
Responsible individual	Stephen Kitchman
Registered manager	Clive Pfeiffer-Richardson
Date of last inspection	24/01/2014

Inspection date	27/11/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people are soundly cared for in this home. They do make progress particularly in the areas of social and self-care skills, but this progress is insufficiently monitored and reviewed. Young people's preferences and needs are generally known by staff, but these are not always appropriately reflected in their individual plans and risk assessments. This means that both potential and changing needs may be overlooked. Young people are kept safe in this home, by some good systems and by sound relationships with staff.

The physical environment of the home is well-cared for and has good outdoor space. The home has effective links with other agencies especially health ones, which means some young people with complex physical needs can access short break services. External colleagues praise the home's approachability and willingness to help. Managerial scrutiny of the quality of care offered by the home is insufficient. There are some shortfalls in relation to the Statement of Purpose and in appropriately notifying significant events. The home is now fully staffed, and staff are appropriately supported by regular supervision and training.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered for a maximum of six young people between the ages of five and under 18 years. It is owned by a city council and provides short-term placements for young people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
17/09/2013	Full	good
12/02/2013	Interim	good progress
07/08/2012	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
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote the welfare of children accommodated there. This specifically refers to ensuring that placement plans and risk assessments are regularly updated to reflect young people's needs and interests (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	02/02/2015
30 (2001)	ensure that if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, that the relevant persons indicated in column 2 are promptly notified (Regulation 30 (1))	02/02/2015
4 (2001)	ensure that the statement of purpose includes all matters listed in Schedule 1 including the procedure	02/02/2015

	if children go missing, and that a copy of the statement of purpose is sent to HMCI (Regulation 4 (1) (2))	
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate appraisal (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	02/02/2015
34 (2001)	ensure that the matters set out in Schedule 6 are monitored at least once in every three months in order to improve the quality of care in the children's home, and the report is sent to HMCI (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b) (2) (3))	02/02/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. This specifically relates to monitoring and reviewing children's progress against agreed outcomes (NMS 21.1)
- ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of children and those significant to them are taken into account in monitoring staff and in developing the home (NMS 1.7)
- ensure that each child's placement plan is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensure that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child (NMS 25.2)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action where needed (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people do make progress in this home, particularly in the areas of social skills and self-care skills. They are encouraged by staff to develop more independence skills and staff work appropriately with other agencies to promote these developments. However, the home does not yet have an effective system for recording and monitoring young people's progress against agreed outcomes. This means that young people may not be acquiring all the skills that they could.

Some young people have complex health needs and staff generally meet these well, by working closely with other agencies and learning particular procedures for individual young people. Young people's everyday health needs are also well-met by the provision of a comfortable and hygienic environment and attractive, nutritious food. All young people benefit from excellent attendance at school.

Staff encourage young people to express their wishes and feelings about their everyday care, and use their good knowledge of young people's preferences and picture symbol systems to enable young people to make choices especially about their food and drinks. Young people who are new to the unit are sensitively introduced, and introductions take place at a pace they are comfortable with.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people usually have sound relationships with staff, and are clearly relaxed with them. This generally creates a calm atmosphere in the home, which enables young people to enjoy their stay appropriately. Staff and young people eat together, and do young people - led activities for example, riding on especially adapted bikes in the home's grounds. Young people also enjoy DVD's and games and can, with appropriate safeguards, bring in the electronic devices that they enjoy at home. The provision of home-made food is a strength of this home and young people enjoy choosing their favourites. There is an effective system for determining young people's dietary likes and needs, which reflects both their preferences and any medical issues.

Parents are not currently routinely involved in the life of the home for example, through regular meetings or routine newsletters, although there are plans to restart this involvement. This means that some parents are not clear about some aspects of the home's running, and this leads to misunderstandings about what the home offers particularly in relation to activities. The home is not currently sending out feedback forms to parents or other professional colleagues. This means that the home misses out on opportunities to improve the service offered to particular young people to better meet their needs. However, overall the services the home offers are clearly

highly valued by parents and professional colleagues alike.

Each young person has an individual placement plan. These detail some key information and characteristics about young people, to inform their day-to day care. However, these are not consistently completed to the same standard, nor are they effectively updated. This means that there is a risk that insufficient consideration is given by the service to young people's individualised needs, and changes to those needs.

This home is usually effective in meeting young people's health needs. There are strong links with community medical staff, who help train and inform home staff about physical procedures to promote young people's well-being. This means that some of the most physically vulnerable young people can receive short break services. Staff also have valuable and regular contact with CAMHS workers who offer behaviour management support in relation to particular young people as well as training. This helps support staff to deal more effectively with young people's emotional and psychological health needs. There are appropriate procedures for medication administration and dispensing.

The home has satisfactory relationships with young people's schools. Young people are usually transported to and from school by the home's transport, which enables routine contact between school and home. Staff also attend reviews and on occasion, observe young people in the classroom. There is no effective transfer of the individualised school targets for young people into their daily care in the home. This means that home and school are not always focusing on the same areas for development. However, overall these sound links with schools contribute to helping young people receive a consistent level of care across all settings.

The home is well-located and designed with homely communal areas, and usable and well -equipped outdoor space. Bedrooms are clean and well-maintained, and particularly where young people are frequent stayers staff do try to appropriately personalise these. This helps young people to feel at home.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people demonstrate by their relaxed relationships with staff that they feel safe in this home. Those that know them best also feel that they are kept safe. They are looked after in a well-maintained environment, and kept safe by effective health and safety practice particularly in relation to fire precautions and evacuations.

Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, and sensitive to the particular vulnerabilities of young people in short break arrangements. For example, new admissions are carefully assessed to minimise any bullying risks. Young people going missing is not currently an issue, because of appropriate staff to young people ratios and sound security in the home. In addition to the general missing child policy, some

young people have individual strategies to help protect them.

Staff promote positive behaviour in young people by anticipating their needs. If this is unsuccessful they use de-escalation and distraction techniques to avert any escalation of behaviour. If necessary the young person is guided away from challenging behaviour triggers. These methods are generally successful in that, there are low rates of restraint. When used, restraint is satisfactorily recorded and monitored by managers.

Each young person has an individualised risk assessment which details potential risks to their well-being and strategies to offset this risk. However, these are not consistently completed and updated. This means that any changes in behavioural patterns may be missed.

Leadership and management

adequate

There are some significant shortfalls in the overall scrutiny and monitoring of the quality of care offered in this home. These do not have an adverse effect on young people's welfare, but do mean that their optimum well-being is not being fully promoted. The management structure in this home is lean with operational senior posts being the next layer after the Registered Manager. There is an appropriately qualified Registered Manager in a full-time post and based in the home. In addition to his management duties he also does regular practical tasks with young people, which enables him to get to know them well and have some oversight of their care.

Regulation 33 reports are reliably completed and appropriately sent to Ofsted. However the manager does not complete Regulation 34 reports which are the required management tool for monitoring the quality of care in the home. This means that there is insufficient management scrutiny of practice in the home, which limits the manager's ability to make changes to improve young people's experiences in the home.

Young people's records are not well-kept, in that not all are completed appropriately. There is a system in place for auditing records, but this is clearly not effective. The home's Statement of Purpose requires updating, both to accurately reflect the services offered by the home, and to bring it in line with regulations for example, it does not currently detail the procedure to be used when young people go missing. The manager does have an appropriate development plan in place.

Since the last inspection there has been one significant complaint made about the home, which has been considered by the appropriate agencies. Ofsted as the regulator, were not notified about this event as they should have been, and this shortfall has limited external scrutiny of this complaint.

External colleagues are positive about the approachability and flexibility of the home

and its everyday communication. They describe the home as always being willing to listen to concerns about young people and to offer extra help if possible. Staff feel supported and receive regular supervision and appropriate training. They do not currently receive routine appraisals which limits their professional development.

There have been some good developments in the home since the last inspection. The home is now fully staffed, which helps give young people a consistent care experience. Staff have recently had some whole team training, and a team day is organised including sessions from external colleagues on behaviour, and a further planned session on involving young people in activities. These are positive initiatives which will promote improvements in the quality of care offered in the home.

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.