

SC037762

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and provides care for up to five children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2025 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/04/2024	Full	Good
10/05/2023	Full	Good
19/05/2022	Full	Good
27/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress as a result of the dedication and care of nurturing staff. A consistent, thoughtful approach, focused on achieving positive outcomes, fosters the growth of trusting relationships.

Children are encouraged to express their views, wishes and feelings, which staff actively consider in care planning, activities and meal choices. One child was helped to write down their wishes in preparation for a recent review meeting. This approach values and reflects children's perspectives.

Staff are improving records by writing directly to children in a caring, non-blaming tone, tailored to each child's level of understanding. This is intended to assist children both now and in the future, should they choose to revisit their records later in life.

Therapeutic support from the children and families practice trainer has helped staff to care for each child with greater understanding and patience. The home's warm, family-like atmosphere allows children to feel safe, accepted and free to be themselves.

Children's healthcare needs are well managed through clear documentation, safe medication practices and close collaboration with external professionals, including child and adolescent mental health services. Staff are committed to supporting one child's sleep difficulties by promoting sleep hygiene, and they are also seeking external guidance. Although progress is gradual, staff's dedication remains unwavering.

Staff show genuine warmth and kindness towards children and each other, fostering a homely environment and a strong team spirit. Interactions are nurturing, and children are treated with unconditional care and respect.

Staff and managers advocate tirelessly for children's best interests. One child said, 'I can rely on staff for anything, knowing I'll be supported, helped and kept safe.'

All the children are in education, with tailored support provided to meet their individual needs. Staff have proactively sought external guidance to help identify a more suitable educational pathway for a child who has experienced learning challenges.

The home's therapy dog is a welcome presence, with fun and engaging interactions reflecting the strong bond built with the children. This connection has helped one child to settle in and to feel at ease in their new environment.

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

Staff have a clear understanding of each child's risks and vulnerabilities, and they respond swiftly and sensitively to concerns. Their approach is rooted in trauma-informed

practice, ensuring that safeguarding procedures are followed and that concerns are escalated to relevant professionals, including the police and specialist services. This enables the children to receive holistic, wraparound support that prioritises emotional safety and trust.

Children's safety is central to staff practice. When children experience unsettling emotions, staff respond with nurturing language and a deep understanding of their needs, resulting in minimal use of physical intervention. When used, interventions are proportionate, brief, and clearly documented, with reflective reviews that inform future practice. Regular multidisciplinary meetings support timely information-sharing and safe outcomes. Post-incident support is empathetic, giving children space to reflect and to feel heard. The culture of the home is one of continuous learning for staff and children, with a goal of improving each time.

Risk assessments and support plans for the children focus on the prevention of incidents and ensuring that staff understand the risks. While some children occasionally go missing, staff never give up or question the stability of the child's placement. Staff follow missing-from-home protocols and work closely with relevant professionals to ensure that children return home safely. Staff's unwavering commitment and consistent care show children that they are valued, supported and safe.

While notifications to the regulator have occasionally been inconsistent, staff remain committed to ensuring that children's voices are heard and acted on.

Feedback from professionals is overwhelmingly positive, with many examples of children's progress. One family member said, 'Anything that's been going on, I've had a phone call and text message... they're really nice; I don't have anything bad to say at all.' A social worker commented, 'They are showing they're willing to work together with anything that is needed for the child.'

Health and safety in the home, including fire safety, are effective. Children live in a safe environment, and staff and children know what is expected in an emergency to keep themselves and others safe.

Permanent members of staff are safely and carefully vetted. However, recruitment records for casual staff members do not always demonstrate that they are checked in accordance with the requirements of The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

Staff treat children with respect and understanding, tailored to their individual experiences. Children feel confident raising concerns with staff. Consistent boundaries and transparent practices help the children feel safe and understand consequences. Even small achievements are celebrated, building self-worth and confidence through a trauma-informed approach.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a respected registered manager whose passion for delivering high-quality care inspires the team. Staff take pride in their role of helping children succeed, resulting in excellent care from a team that is genuinely committed to helping children flourish.

The registered manager has a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. Their phased approach to improvement is effective and is paced in a way that staff value and appreciate.

Staff consistently report feeling well supported by the registered manager, and they enjoy working in the home. Regular supervision, team meetings and reflective sessions with the children and families practice trainer enhance their professional development and foster a sense of value. As a result, staff morale is high.

Staff are fully aware of the procedures for reporting allegations and escalating concerns, ensuring that safeguarding protocols are followed rigorously. Therapeutic input plays a key role in helping staff respond to children's needs through a trauma-informed lens, promoting safety, trust and emotional well-being.

Staff receive appropriate mandatory and specialist training, tailored to emerging behaviours and risks. This ensures that children are supported by a well-trained team that is equipped to deliver safe, trauma-informed care. Almost all the staff have successfully completed their level 3 qualification.

Children are cared for by a consistent and sufficiently staffed team. Managers work proactively to ensure flexibility in staff availability and support, enabling the children to receive care from a familiar and skilled workforce.

The manager consistently models effective, proactive and collaborative working with professionals. Relationships between the home, the wider professional network and the child's parents or family members are clear and mutually supportive. Communication around safeguarding concerns is clear and timely. This has led to excellent partnership working, contributing to positive outcomes for the children.

Staff ensure that the children have positive and enriching experiences. They provide structure through consistent routines, instil clear boundaries, and take time to engage meaningfully with the children, showing genuine interest in their hobbies and interests wherever possible. Children enjoy a wide range of activities and are encouraged to participate in groups tailored to their individual needs. These opportunities enable children to explore new interests, maintain physical fitness and build positive connections in the community.

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, The 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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(d))	1 December 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, have achieved the qualification in regulation 32 (4) within the relevant time frame listed in regulation 32 (5). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

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: SC037762

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2EA

Responsible individual: Sam Bushby

Registered manager: Paul Thomas

Inspector

Emma Haskell, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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