

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC037910
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
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	Tamara Julia Pearcey
Date of last inspection	06/11/2013

Inspection date	04/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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Young people receive outstanding levels of care, support and guidance leading to them making significant progress in improving their behaviour, education and personal development. Young people say they feel safe and looked after and benefit considerably from living in long term stable placements.

Extremely positive and meaningful relationships are shared between staff and young people which assist them to significantly improve levels of self-esteem and self-worth and to move forward in their lives.

A holistic and comprehensive approach to care planning, assessment and review allows for extremely individualised care programmes to be implemented. These meet the specific and changing needs of each young person and are followed by staff in practice. Emotional wellbeing is placed at the centre of care planning with young people receiving an excellent standard of health care overall including regular expert advice and guidance.

A culture of safety ensures young people are kept as safe as possible and greatly reduce their risk taking behaviours. Staff work hard to provide a consistent and committed level of care with an approach that allows young people every opportunity to express how they feel.

The home is managed excellently with the needs of young people continually at the forefront of practice and development. Young people are looked after by a stable, motivated and committed staff team who understand their individual needs.

This is a home that maintains excellent standards of care whilst striving to improve and develop further. No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection with none made on this occasion.

Full report

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 no more than four young people who have complex behavioural and emotional needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/11/2013	Interim	good progress
09/04/2013	Full	outstanding
17/12/2012	Interim	good progress
28/06/2012	Full	outstanding

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Outcomes for young people are outstanding. Young people receive excellent levels of care and make considerable progress as a result, notably given their starting points. Highly individualised support helps them develop their life and social skills with young people significantly improving their behaviour, levels of self-esteem, confidence and general outlook on life.

Young people benefit greatly from a home that provides them with stability and a sense of belonging. Young people say they 'feel cared for' and there is nothing that could be improved. A vast majority of young people have lived at the home for a number of years and state they wish to stay until they move into adulthood, semi-independent or independent living. This is supported by a stable and experienced staff team who provide a continuity of care which meets the specific needs of young people.

Young people have their health needs promoted to an excellent standard. In particular their emotional and psychological well-being which is addressed in a holistic fashion that includes direct access to specialist support. Due to the quality of such interventions, young people's awareness of risks associated with certain behaviours is raised; for example, sexual health issues and self-harm. Such an approach enables them to significantly reduce the negative ways they previously dealt with feelings of stress, anxiety or frustration.

Young people make extremely good progress with their education; for many such progress is exceptional given their starting points. Young people clearly gain from living in an environment where their progress is valued and promoted. Attendance at school for young people is very good and they benefit from a living in a culture where the importance of learning is embedded in day to day life.

Young people benefit considerably from support in developing and maintaining contact with parents/carers and friends. Contact arrangements are established at the point of admission and known by staff who provide support and guidance to ensure meetings are carefully considered and facilitated. Young people are encouraged to bring friends to the home and to develop appropriate relationships with them; this approach culminates in an environment which is homely and family orientated.

Young people are provided with excellent support and encouragement to prepare for life as they approach adulthood. The notion of improving independence skills and experiences is a cornerstone of the home. Individualised programmes take account of the needs of the young person concerned and can include independent travel, living on a budget, cooking and seeking employment. Staff work hard to assist young people to move away from institutionalised ideas of living in care with realistic

expectations in place to help them improve their levels of maturity and responsibility. This sensitive, yet pro-active, approach enables young people to grow in confidence and develop their skills. Young people who have left keep in touch and continue to make significant progress and live productive and meaningful lives as adults. Given their starting points such progress is exceptional.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people receive an outstanding quality of care. Young people share excellent relationships with staff which in turn helps them to thrive within a caring and supportive environment. Young people state that, 'all the staff are splendid...'staff are always there for me'. Behaviour is extremely good with positive relationships amongst young people helping to create an environment where appropriate behaviour is the norm. Social workers say, 'the care and support the young people receive is of platinum standard...lovely homely, welcoming atmosphere...staff are not isolated in offices but spend the majority of their time on shift with the young people'. Interactions between staff and young people confirmed the homes ethos of promoting mutual respect and understanding.

The views of young people are most important with effective procedures in place to ensure they contribute to the running of the home and decisions which affect their lives. Formal young people's meetings take place monthly with young people noting that, 'we do get listened to', while informal dialogue is a constant feature. It was clear that young people can express their views easily utilising the strength of relationships with staff to talk openly. Recent input from young people has contributed to the choice of the homes décor, discussing proposals for young people to move in and being involved in the interview process for potential new staff. Young people have also recently been consulted on proposals from the authority to develop new children's homes in the future.

A robust procedure is in place to address matters of concern or complaint with young people saying they understood how to do so. Very few complaints have been made since the last inspection and those that had, had been thoroughly investigated and responded to. Records are comprehensive and evidence the involvement of young people at every stage including their comments when outcomes have been reached.

Care planning is a strength of the home with an excellent standard of assessment, planning and review ensuring young people have their specific needs met. The Registered Manager is heavily involved with the authority in considering the appropriateness of potential referrals. Such an approach allows for the early assessment of needs to be considered thus leading to the careful matching of placements and a far greater chance of successful transitions.

Programmes of care take a full account of the holistic needs of young people and involve them, and those important to them, in their development. Each young

person's identity is valued and any specific needs, whether cultural or religious are known and met to an excellent standard. Plans are devised in cooperation with other professionals such as from a child psychologist working with the home and the Looked After Children's nurse. The detailed plans utilise the model of care adopted by the home, which focuses on meeting emotional wellbeing, as a foundation to providing care and intervention. Care plans provide staff with clear guidance as to how to meet the needs of young people which are followed in practice. All staff are specifically trained to implement this particular care model which further enhances the quality of care being provided.

A comprehensive assessment process is in place to review the needs of young people against their initial care plan. Such reviews allow for an excellent holistic review which considers all aspects of individual needs and is an extremely valuable living document. These consultations take place regularly and include the involvement of the whole staff team, psychologists and community mental health experts. This enables all contributors of the care plan to review its effectiveness and subsequent progress.

Young people receive excellent health care with particular emphasis on meeting their emotional and psychological well-being. All required health care processes are implemented such as attendance at routine medical appointments and the appropriate storage and administration of medicines. Excellent working relationships have ensured young people receive age appropriate sexual health advice and guidance from health care specialists who meet regularly with them, confidentially in the comfort of the home. The home have easy access to specialist child and adolescent mental health services which ensures young people can receive direct access to resources and intervention. In many cases this means young people can be seen soon after arriving; this is most impressive and enables young people with issues such as self-harmful thoughts to gain timely intervention. All aspects of care planning and intervention place emotional well-being as a guiding principle of practice. Such an approach also ensures issues of addressing mental wellbeing is seen as most important and a normal part of growing up. This helps to avoid the risk of stigmatisation.

Education is highly valued and promoted in the home. There is an established culture that all young people attend school or college and this has led to very good attendance rates and excellent educational achievements. This is especially important given the starting point of each young person when they move in; for some their progress has been exceptional. Close liaison is maintained between the home and schools and this enables joined up strategies for young people to engage in their education and learning. Where delays occur or decisions regarding post 16 education and training placements are unclear, the home swiftly and appropriately, challenges education providers to ensure young people receive fair opportunities that are not limited in any way by them living in care.

Young people are provided with considerable support to enjoy activities and pursuits.

The routines of the home are set to provide structure, but at the same time are flexible and responsive to each young person's individual needs. Young people regularly attend local swimming pools and leisure centres and are well supported to engage in their local community, which includes young people being encouraged to have friends visit them in the home.

Young people live in a home that provides an excellent standard of accommodation and facilities. There is a commitment to providing a pleasant living environment which is as homely as possible. The décor is of a very high quality with the home being well maintained inside and out. The environment was found to be clean and hygienic. Young people are enabled to personalise their rooms, with communal areas providing a relaxed atmosphere with all modern entertainment items in place.

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Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

The home promotes a culture of safety where robust measures are consistently implemented to keep young people as safe as possible. Young people say they feel safe and receive extremely good opportunities to learn how to take appropriate responsibility for their own wellbeing. This includes the home facilitating internet safety awareness training and the involvement of specialised workers who aim to reduce the risk of young people being exploited. Staff are trained in safeguarding matters with the home taking a preventative stance with any issues which may indicate a child protection concern.

The specific emotional and behavioural needs of young people are assessed in detail prior to their arrival and met thereafter. This ensures staff are fully aware of the risks they may pose to themselves or others. Risk assessments focus on key areas of concern, including self-harm, violence or running away from care and provide an excellent guide and reduction/management strategy for staff who follow them in practice. Young people are made fully aware of the plans in place for them, notably if any potential risk involves behaviour which could impact on their peer group.

The approach toward addressing challenging or risk taking behaviours ensures young people make progress in keeping themselves safe. The home is excellent at networking with all relevant safeguarding agencies to provide a joined up approach. This has been particularly useful for young people who may place themselves at risk of exploitation when away from adult supervision. For instance young people have made considerable progress in reducing the occasions when they leave the home without permission or act in a violent manner; this is particularly significant for a number of young people given their starting points.

Young people live in a home where appropriate behaviour is encouraged and

expected. Staff impose consistent boundaries which young people say are, 'fair'. Behaviour seen during the inspection was excellent with the quality of relationships between staff and young people, indicating an environment where mutual respect is understood and appreciated.

The home implements a restorative justice approach with staff seeking to apply this wherever appropriate. For example where there have been incidents between each other, young people are brought together to discuss their problems and are supported to appreciate what impact their behaviour, or indeed comments, may have on others. This is having a positive impact in vastly reducing the need to implement punitive sanctions with young people learning improved levels of control and negotiation skills to resolve differences.

Staff are trained to deal with incidents where the use of physical intervention may be necessary. The use of restraint is extremely low with just one such event occurring since the last inspection. The atmosphere of the home, coupled with the strength of relationships, results in a home where young people feel able to talk about their issues rather than act them out negatively.

Health and safety is given a suitable priority with all required checks and tests being completed thus ensuring the wellbeing of all who live and work in the home. Fire drills are carried out monthly, while the servicing and testing of fire-fighting equipment is routinely completed.

Leadership and management

outstanding

An outstanding approach ensures the home is managed to the highest standards. The Registered Manager has a wealth of experience having been registered with Ofsted in 2008. She is suitably qualified and displays a vast understanding of young people's needs being passionate about advocating on their behalf and providing them with the best levels of care. The Registered Manager has appropriately high expectations of staff practice and leads by example in setting the bar high. Feedback from social workers and independent reviewing officers confirmed the home is run in an excellent way that consistently places the individual needs of young people as the paramount concern. Comments included, 'management and leadership are excellent...the manager leads by example and both challenges and supports her staff well'.

A rigorous process of monitoring ensures all aspects of the home are routinely assessed, reviewed and evaluated. The Registered Manager completes monthly reviews of care that are both comprehensive and objective. The subsequent reports provide an in depth evaluation of the standards of care provision and in particular the progress of each young person. Such thorough analysis enables patterns or trends in behaviour, attitude or emotional wellbeing to be fully considered against care plans and the overall aims of the placement. This means the impact of intervention

strategies are continually examined to ensure they meet the needs of young people and supports their progress. External monitoring occurs monthly which provides a useful critique of the home and the quality of care provision.

A highly motivated staff team deliver outstanding levels of care, support and guidance to young people. Good numbers of staff are deployed night and day who have a keen understanding of the specific needs of young people in their care and how these should be met. This stable, experienced, committed and skilled group of staff are well supported to undertake their roles. Staff say they receive extremely good levels of supervision which is professional, empowering and developmental. Comments from staff noted, 'morale is great...you couldn't ask for more support and encouragement...I am proud to work here'.

Staff receive excellent levels of training that supports them in providing high quality care, develops their skills and promotes the importance of qualifications. All staff hold the qualification in care, with many exceeding this requirement. In addition all staff hold distinctions in the accredited level 4 training in the model of care implemented at the home. Staff are assisted to further their learning and career developments; for example by undertaking degree level qualifications such as the Diploma in Social Work (Dip SW). On-going training takes a full account of how best to look after vulnerable young people which has included staff completing courses in sexual exploitation, self-harmful behaviours and teenage psychology. Staff praised the quality of training and spoke with knowledge and appreciation of how their learning had impacted positively on their practice and indeed had enhanced their abilities to care for young people.

Records are stored securely and maintained accurately. This ensures young people have their lives at the home, progress and plans for their future, captured in a comprehensive manner.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection and none are required to be made on this occasion.

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.