

SC037910

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full 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 four young people irrespective of gender who have emotional and/or behavioural needs.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people form warm and positive attachments to staff. They have a sense of belonging and feel cared for.

- Young people grow in confidence and blossom in self-esteem. For example, they have been able to represent the views of other young people at national events.
- Young people make good progress in their education and independence. Some young people are able to self-medicate. Some have obtained their provisional driving licence and look forward to learning to drive.
- Young people are in good health. Staff support them to have health assessments and attend routine appointments.
- Young people make friends with others outside the home. They invite them over or go for a sleepover.
- Some young people's risk-taking behaviour, such as going missing or misusing alcohol, significantly reduces. The registered manager facilitates high-risk strategy meetings for young people who continue to make poor choices.
- Young people learn a sense of responsibility for society, for example by volunteering at a local animal sanctuary.
- Staff demonstrate a commitment to young people, placing them at the centre of practice and listening to their views. They advocate for them when planning for the transition to adulthood. They ensure that young people have access to a personal adviser.
- The registered manager ensures that detailed care plans are in place to inform staff. She keeps these under regular review.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Short-term emergency placements have been made outside the current statement of purpose and to the detriment of relationships between young people.
- The independent visitor's reports do not reflect upon significant incidents.
- Some significant events and updates to them have not been reported to Ofsted.
- Supervision is not sufficiently reflective.
- The home has not implemented a clear strategy to deal with online conflicts between young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2017	Full	Good
21/09/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/09/2015	Full	Good

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, 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
In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person is required to – Ensure that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (2)(a))	13/12/2017
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 44 (4)(a))	13/12/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	13/12/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person has specific responsibilities under regulation 34 to prepare and implement policies setting out: arrangements for the safeguarding of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19) In particular, revise arrangements in relation to dealing with e-safety and reflect such arrangements in individual risk assessments.
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2) In particular, ensure that supervision records demonstrate staff reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The registered manager is determined that young people benefit from a warm and inviting home where they feel safe and accepted, no matter what has gone before in their lives. Young people form good relationships with the adults who care for them. They develop a sense of belonging. Their confidence grows and their self-worth blossoms. For example, a young person represented the local authority at a national event for care professionals. A young person said, 'I love it here; I miss it when I am at college and want to come home.' A professional stated, 'Staff provide a supportive and emotionally warm home environment.'

Staff spend time with young people. They listen to them and try to understand what young people are saying through their behaviour. Key workers talk through pertinent issues with young people and help them to think carefully about their decisions. Young people have a voice in this home and further afield; for example, a young person gave his view on what makes a homely environment when the local authority was planning to build new children's homes.

Most young people make good progress in their education. They are able to gain GCSEs and go on to further education, in some instances getting distinctions for their work. For young people not accessing education, staff advocate for them to obtain school places and work with them to help them understand the value of education. Staff use an education room on the premises as an interim measure to promote young people's learning. Some young people plan their careers and aspire to go to university to gain relevant qualifications.

Young people make good progress in their independence. They use public transport to visit friends, sometime staying for a sleepover. They learn how to manage a budget and how to cook. A professional said, 'There is a well-developed independent living skills programme.'

Young people demonstrate a mature attitude to the wider community; for example, a young person volunteers at a local cat sanctuary. The registered manager has a development plan for young people to access a wider range of community activities and local clubs.

Staff consider transitions into adulthood carefully. They ensure that young people have access to a personal adviser and staff contribute to the pathway plan. Staff discuss young people's readiness for leaving with a clinical psychologist. They go to considerable effort to make future placements successful. Young people test their own readiness for independence while the registered manager keeps their place in the home open for their return if necessary.

Young people are in good health. Staff arrange for health assessments with the looked-after child nurse. They act on health action plans and support young people to attend

routine health appointments. Some young people, who were once considered unable to manage their own medication, are now able to do so. A young person spoke proudly of her progress to reach this stage.

Staff celebrate important dates for young people, such as their birthday or anniversary of coming to the home. Young people speak highly of the celebrations and the gifts that they receive.

Young people are able to contact their parents and others who are important to them. The registered manager carefully risk assesses the arrangements so that young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships. A professional said, 'Staff work well with families and go the extra mile to support contact with them.'

Two young people, who are no longer living in the home, were in conflict with each other. Staff tried to manage their differences. A placing social worker said, 'Staff struggled with the young people when they became difficult.' The situation became untenable and both young people were discharged from the home. A young person subsequently sent a card that said, 'You have helped me and touched my heart in a unique way.'

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

Staff prioritise the safeguarding of the young people. They discuss strategies at the regular 'pillars of parenting' meeting with the clinical psychologist. Key workers update risk assessments monthly so that the immediate risks and subsequent control measures are readily known to the wider staff team. They work with other professionals to keep young people as safe as possible. Young people enjoy a good relationship with their key workers and feel able to share their worries.

Some young people make significant improvements in their risk-taking behaviour, reducing the frequency of episodes of going missing and putting themselves at risk of sexual exploitation. They understand the risks they have taken and regret their previous decisions, and determine to make the right choices in the future. Other young people, who are no longer resident in the home, have continued to go missing and, in some cases, committed criminal offences in the community. The registered manager arranges independent return home interviews to check young people's welfare and understand the reasons for going missing. She has been proactive in arranging high-risk strategy meetings and a review of the care plan.

Young people show a good knowledge of how to stay safe online. On occasion, young people have placed comments on social media about other young people in the home, triggering conflict and challenging behaviour. Staff manage these incidents as best they can and encourage young people to have restorative meetings with each other. Staff work with other professionals to deal with the allegations of misconduct that young people have posted about each other. Staff do not consider the trigger for the incident. This means that risk assessments have no specific detail about the control measures for use of social media to reduce the chance of recurrence.

Staff use a restorative justice approach to avoid the use of sanctions. They are on hand to de-escalate situations before physical intervention is required. There have been two exceptions to this since the last inspection. Staff have recorded these in line with the regulations and the registered manager has reviewed them.

The registered manager has a procedure in place that staff follow in the event of an allegation. She has a good relationship with the local authority safeguarding officer, making referrals if appropriate. She follows the advice and guidance of others, including the police, to keep everyone safe while necessary investigations take place. She ensures that there are clear written outcomes for professional meetings and the decision-making process is clear.

The registered manager adopts safer recruitment practice so that she employs individuals deemed to be suitable to work with young people. She has all the necessary health and safety certification in place. Young people and staff know how to evacuate in an emergency. Young people live in a safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager is suitably qualified and has lengthy experience in residential care. A competent deputy manager and staff team support her. The team is enthusiastic about their work and committed to promoting positive outcomes for the young people. This is evident as they plan carefully for transitions, putting emphasis on both young people's practical skills and their emotional preparedness.

The registered manager writes a summary of each month's events and reports to her line manager. This gives a useful summary and oversight of the events in the home that the registered manager reflects upon. She uses such reports to inform her statutory six-monthly report to Ofsted. She considers any recommendation made by the independent visitor. However, the independent visitor does not routinely assess significant incidents and provide a professional evaluation of them. The registered manager notifies other agencies of significant events and discusses the issues to formulate safeguarding plans. However, she did not notify a significant event resulting in an injury to a young person to Ofsted. On another occasion, she did not update a previous notification when information came to light and further police involvement was needed. This, with the shortfall in the independent visitor's report, means that Ofsted is not able to make a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of care in between inspections.

The registered manager has detailed care plans in place. She keeps them updated to inform staff of the most up-to-date needs and the pertinent issues. Staff show a good knowledge of the needs of each young person. Key staff meet regularly with their key young person and ensure that the care plans are accurate. Young people are aware that they can see the plans but currently elect not to do this.

The registered manager considers referrals to the setting and the impact on other young people. On several occasions since the last inspection, senior managers have requested

that young people stay as short-term emergency placements. This is not in accordance with the statement of purpose and, in one case, was undertaken against the advice of the registered manager. In another case, a senior manager informed the registered manager that a young person was in a vehicle and on the way to the home. The registered manager works with other professionals to revise risk assessments and placement referral information to provide every possible chance of a successful placement in another home. A young person resident in the home, once troubled by emergency admissions, is now more accepting of them. A placing social worker said, of another young person who has now left the home, 'Emergency placements are not always well matched. My young person struggled with some of them and this resulted in verbal aggression between the young people.'

Staff say that they feel well trained and supported. Of particular note is the diploma in the 'pillars of parenting' model that is available to them. Staff demonstrate a good understanding and application of the model in practice. New staff comment positively about their induction. They feel supported by the management team as well as their peers. A member of staff said, 'I feel so lucky to be part of this team.' Line managers provide regular supervision but this does not always include reflection on staff practice. The registered manager has recognised this shortfall and plans to improve this.

Staff put young people's needs at the centre of their practice. They provide consistency and stability so that young people have a sense of permanency and belonging. Young people have a secure base. Staff help them understand their life story. A professional said, 'Staff develop strong relationships with the young people and support them to understand their family situations.'

Staff keep the home in excellent condition. It is well presented and clean. Young people say how proud they are of their home and like to invite their friends around.

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.

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: SC037910

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester
SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: Susan Lomax

Registered manager: Tamara Pearcey

Inspectors

Keith Riley, social care inspector

Maria Lonergan, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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