

SC037910

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a local authority and provides care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since 11 June 2024.

Inspection date: 25 March 2025

Date of last inspection: 20 November 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/11/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/04/2023	Full	Good
21/11/2022	Full	Inadequate
30/08/2022	Full	Inadequate

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The home continues to be led by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager. Leaders and managers have begun to take action to address the shortfalls from the last full inspection. Progress has been made in some areas; however, improvements are still needed to ensure that children receive consistently good care.

Children receive care from staff who understand their individual needs well. Staff are guided by assessments and plans that are individualised and relevant. Staff speak warmly about, and to, children and are committed to providing them with good-quality care. The approach of staff is supporting children to have trusting relationships with staff.

Staff work hard to promote children's engagement in education, liaise closely with partner agencies to support children's progress and to explore alternatives where full-time education is not working. Staff provide a range of educational activities they try and engage children with, such as independence skills awards. Both children have education timetables. For one child, this is clear and detailed. For the other child, this lacks clarity for staff and the child about what is expected.

Children's health needs are generally well understood and met. Staff are proactive in supporting children with day-to-day health and well-being. However, one child has not yet been able to access the therapeutic support they need. While managers and staff have had discussions with partner agencies to try and progress this, more robust challenge is needed to ensure that the child is fully supported with the impact of traumatic experiences.

There is good evidence of children's views being sought and acted on by managers. Regular children's meetings provide one forum for this, and the manager now has a system in place to record and track the response to children's requests. This has helped children to feel heard and have a sense of value.

There has been a serious safeguarding incident since the last full inspection. This impacted significantly on two children, one of whom subsequently left the home. Following this concern coming to light, appropriate action was taken to manage risk and support both children. Managers have helped staff in the home to reflect and learn from this incident.

Children's risks and vulnerabilities are understood by staff. Children have individual protocols and risk assessments that give clear guidance to staff about the action they should take to safeguard children. Managers are proactive in ensuring these are updated and that staff are clear about their responsibilities.

Management oversight has improved in some areas. For example, managers now review all one-to-one sessions with children and use a tracker to help identify patterns, to guide support for children. However, oversight of incidents of concern remains inconsistent. For example, when children go missing from home, records do not clearly capture the actions of staff or the oversight of managers. As a result, it is not always possible for managers to be sure if staff are following plans, and there remain missed opportunities for managers to support staff learning.

Staff are positive about working in the home and the support they get from colleagues and managers. They receive regular supervision and have opportunities to reflect, such as in team meetings. Supervision is used helpfully to address good practice and areas for development. Appropriate training is provided for staff, and managers monitor this effectively. This all helps children to receive care from well-informed, resilient staff.

The requirements made at the last inspection were not all reviewed in detail at this assurance inspection. Those not met will be fully explored at the next full inspection.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that where children are not in full-time education, there are clear plans to structure their day when they are not in school, with activities and tasks which relate to their plans.	27 May 2025
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v))	27 May 2025

In particular, the registered person should ensure that when children present risk-taking behaviours, staff complete relevant work with the child to reduce their risk, in line with their plans. Additionally, the registered person should ensure that risk assessments are clear, and that staff are all following these appropriately when significant incidents happen in the home.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that they have effective oversight of staff practice to ensure that staff are adhering to children's plans. Additionally, the registered person should ensure that they have effective oversight of incidents taking place within the home to ensure that they know what leads up to incidents taking place, and how staff are responding to these so that learning and reflective practice can take place.	27 May 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that leaders and managers challenge a child's placing authority, when required, to enable proper and immediate access to any specialist medical, psychological or psychiatric support that is required. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC037910

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Registered provider address: The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: Deborah Price

Registered manager: Margaret Lilley

Inspector

Jacob Robson, Social Care Inspector

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