

SC407430

Registered provider: Wessex College

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

- The home provides care for up to four children of between 11 and 18 years old.
- Children who live at the home may have experienced trauma, abuse and attachment difficulties.
- Most children will need a high level of support to enable them to understand and manage their behaviours.
- The home is one of six operated by a private organisation.
- The organisation also operates an independent school which children from this home may attend.
- There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 April 2018

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 12 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/07/2016	Full	Good
22/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
13: The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) and (2)(a))	18/05/2018
14: The care planning standard The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that children have the opportunity to contribute to care plans written by the home and that these documents contain the most up-to-date information about the children's needs.	18/05/2018
25: Fire precautions After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—	18/05/2018

ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d)) In particular, ensure that all staff working in the home take part in fire drills and practices.	
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees—receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	18/05/2018
35: Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that—within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)) This specifically relates to consequences imposed on children.	18/05/2018

Recommendations

- Improve how leaders and managers consider the impact that any new child will have on the existing group of children to identify the strengths that children may bring to each other when considering the impact of children moving into the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the previous inspection, the home has experienced a period of turbulence, resulting in some poor care practices. These practices have had a detrimental effect on some children's experiences. When senior leaders and managers identified the shortfalls, they took decisive action to address the concerns.

A new manager, a new staff team and new systems have now been introduced.

Previous staffing arrangements failed to provide children with consistent care. Since the introduction of the new team, staffing has become more stable and consistent. Children are now developing more positive relationships with the new team.

The staff team now has a good understanding of the children's needs. However, some of this knowledge does not transfer to all of the children's care plans. Children do not currently contribute to their care plans.

The manager carefully plans for the move of new children into the home and considers the impact that children may have on one another. However, the written assessment does not include information about why the manager thinks the children are suitably matched. Neither does this assessment include the positive aspects that children will bring to the home and to one another.

Children attend school or college more regularly than they did before. Staff support children effectively to become more independent over time. Staff help children in a caring way, teaching them how to cook, do their laundry and care for themselves.

Staff support children well to maintain and build on relationships with their families. Children have the opportunity to spend time away from the home, independent of staff. Children are developing appropriate and safe social networks and relationships in their community.

Children helped to redesign and decorate the home. They now feel comfortable to invite their friends to spend time with them at home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

On two occasions, the previous manager failed to follow the child protection procedures. Two allegations about members of staff were not reported to the designated officer as required. Senior leaders dealt with the failings and also took action retrospectively to report the concerns as required.

The new manager has followed the child protection procedures correctly. Staff recognised the possible signs of abuse and exploitation of a child and reported these

concerns appropriately.

Incidents have occurred when staff have called the police to assist them in managing children's behaviour. In September 2017, staff called the police to the home, and this resulted in some children having negative experiences that included being arrested and spending time in police custody. Despite staff training to avoid the police being called without due cause, there have been three further incidents of staff calling the police. Senior leaders have reinforced the guidance to staff. Senior leaders are now part of a group with the local police force to continue this development work.

Incidents have occurred where children have attempted to light, or have lit, a fire in the home. Following these incidents, direct work took place with the children about fire safety. However, three out of the six core members of staff have not been involved in a fire drill or practice.

The consequences that staff impose on children do not consistently relate to the behaviour that the children displayed. The consequences are not always restorative. On too many occasions, the effectiveness of the consequence is not evaluated.

Children are making progress to develop their understanding of risk and make healthier and safer choices. There is a reduction in the number of times that some children go missing from the home.

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

Senior leaders identified shortfalls in the management of the home in September 2017. This resulted in changes to the management team and staff group. Leaders and managers have an improved understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Because they have this understanding, children's experiences are beginning to improve.

Leaders and managers identify areas that require improvement, and have a development plan in place. The plan is being implemented. However, the changes are not yet embedded into practice. Priority has been given to ensuring that the new manager and his team develop positive relationships with the children.

Further work is required to improve records kept about children, and the supervision, training and development of the staff team. These weaknesses are included in the manager's development plan.

The manager's systems to review the quality of care are improving to include more depth, analysis and learning. This insight is assisting staff to reflect on their practice and develop their skills.

Leaders and managers have good relationships with other agencies. Extensive work took place with children's placing authorities when leaders and managers had identified that the quality of care that children had been previously receiving in the home was not good enough.

Senior leaders of the company are involved in innovative projects with other agencies to

improve local services for children.

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: SC407430

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wessex College

Registered provider address: Wessex College Limited, 4 Cedar Park, Cobham Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne BH21 7SF

Responsible individual: Selina Wall

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Nicola Lownds, social care inspector

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