

SC407430

Registered provider: Wessex College Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private provider and offers care for up to four children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that care is provided for children with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2020.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 August 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 20 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/10/2022	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children said they 'like' living at this home, while the third child told the inspector that they 'love it'. They like the staff who care for them and feel safe. Affectionate relationships exist between the staff and the children. These are built on trust and respect. Children feel listened to and say their views and opinions are valued. Staff are very proud of the children they care for and celebrate their achievements.

Children are making progress and their outcomes are good. Staff support children effectively and meet their individual needs. Consequently, children's self-confidence and sense of self-worth have increased.

Since the previous inspection, two children who lived at the home for a long time have successfully moved on to the next stage in their lives. A new child has moved in. This move was well planned, although it led to a change in the home's dynamics. These are now settling as the three children learn to live together. One of the children who has left had a positive impact on the other children, who saw him as a role model and a 'big brother' figure. This child wrote a letter to the new children coming to the home about his experiences. He said that the new children will soon see the home as their home and he listed all the things he achieved, including learning to drive, going to college, getting an apprenticeship and having the confidence to plan and travel abroad on his own.

Staff support children to pursue their interests and hobbies as well as encouraging them to try new things. Currently, one child is looking into local football clubs, while another continues to be part of a rock choir. When this child is involved in concerts, the other children and staff attend to cheer them on. Staff create beautiful memory books for the children. These books are full of photos and represent a lovely record of the children's time at the home.

Care plans provide comprehensive guidance for staff on the children's needs and how these are to be met. Good-quality one-to-one sessions take place with the children. Topics discussed are varied and linked to the children's needs and incidents that have happened. Records of these sessions are good quality and clearly demonstrate the child's involvement and how staff help them to understand their lives and make decisions about their future.

Staff have ensured children have a comfortable, well-furnished home. Children are encouraged to put forward ideas for how they want their bedrooms personalised and how the home is furnished.

Currently, not all the children are in full-time education. However, staff are taking action to address this and support the children to engage in education.

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

Children feel safe at the home. They said they have lots of staff they can talk to if they are worried. Staff have a good understanding of their role and how to protect children. Safeguarding records evidence staff's swift actions to help children when there are concerns about their safety. On two occasions, safeguarding records did not include the date on which disclosures of historical abuse were made.

Behaviour and risk are managed well. This is due to the comprehensive understanding the staff have of each child and the strong relationships they have built together. The approach to behaviour management is positive reinforcement and reward rather than a punitive approach. This is proving effective and helps children to develop strategies to enable them to identify and manage their own emotions and behaviours.

Restraint is rarely used. On the two occasions it has been used since the previous inspection, this was appropriate to keep the child safe. Meaningful discussions take place with children and staff after these incidents to understand what could be done differently another time to help the child. Records of restraint incidents are comprehensive.

The home has recently had new fire doors fitted and painted. During this inspection, two fire doors were found to be ill-fitting and others were wedged open. The registered manager has arranged for the doors to be fixed and is exploring more appropriate ways to keep the doors open.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home benefits from having a very experienced, child-centred and inspirational manager. She is well respected and an excellent role model for the team. The manager communicates her enthusiasm and drive effectively to provide children with a safe and happy home to live in. She has high expectations of herself, the staff and the children. This strong and effective leadership has led to a positive ethos permeating throughout the home, with the well-being, development and safety of the children at its heart. Staff and children wanted the inspector to know that the manager is 'amazing', 'brilliant' and 'exceptional'.

Monitoring of the home is highly effective. The manager has an accurate understanding of what is happening at the home and the progress children are making. She uses lessons learned from her monitoring and current research-based practice to develop the quality of care and help children to make continuous progress. This has been particularly successful when using current approaches and expertise to support children with their identity and sexuality. The comprehensive development plan demonstrates the manager's clear vision for the future.

Children make progress because they receive consistency of care from a stable, well-trained team of staff. The team is keen to learn and develop, often finding

creative ways to help children to make progress. A highly successful example includes the implementation of a 'staying close' approach to support children to move on positively from the home. Staff and managers are excellent advocates for the children. They will escalate concerns swiftly to get the best outcome for the child, while retaining effective working relationships with other professionals.

Staff receive regular, good-quality supervisions, which they value. Supervisions provide a forum for staff to reflect on and develop their practice and support their well-being. Since the previous inspection, the quality of supervision records has improved. These now reflect the discussion held more comprehensively.

The manager has put in place strong management support and effective systems for when she is absent from the home. She empowers the staff team to take ownership of the home and contribute to its success.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all new fire doors close as required after they have been painted. In addition, they should find safe ways to keep fire doors open should this be necessary. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children are in full-time education while they are of compulsory school age, or in full-time further education or work if above this age. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receiving disclosures of historical abuse from children clearly record the date of the disclosure. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.11)

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: SC407430

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wessex College Limited

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton, Greater Manchester BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Samantha Choules

Registered manager: Claire Bates

Inspector

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector

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