

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC407430
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Wessex College Limited
Registered provider address	4 Cedar Park, Cobham Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne BH21 7SF

Responsible individual	Joanne Sams
Registered manager	Anita Howard
Inspector	Wendy Anderson

Inspection date	12/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC407430

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have developed effective and trusting relationships with the staff who care for them. These relationships are enhanced due to the stability of the staff team.
- Staff at the home undergo a comprehensive induction that is supported by an ongoing training programme. This programme not only meets young people's identified needs but also enables staff to respond swiftly to their emerging needs.
- Safeguarding procedures at the home are robust and adhered to in practice. Staff have a strong working knowledge of these procedures and their importance.
- Young people have bespoke care and behavioural plans, which are frequently reviewed to ensure that they meet young people's needs. These plans help young people develop an understanding of themselves and their behaviours. They also help young people to develop self-management strategies and through these reduce their risk-taking behaviours.
- Fellow professionals said that the team and senior managers have developed strong working relationships with them, and that this has led to joint working practices that have benefited the young people and their development.
- The registered manager's monitoring is not consistently identifying gaps in recording and then addressing these. Also, some of the young people's files are poorly organised.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
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, when a placing authority fails to provide information requested, the staff should use the information they have received to develop a detailed care plan. (Regulation 14(1(a)))	30/09/2016
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 a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35(3(a)(viii)))	30/09/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. In particular, the record of staff interviews should include an explanation of the scoring system used to decide whether to employ or not. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. In particular, key-worker records should reflect more detail of the discussions which take place. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

- This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for four young people, irrespective of gender, with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is one of four children's homes operated by a private organisation. The organisation also provides an independent school, which young people from this home can attend.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/08/2015	Full	Good
07/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/07/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people benefit from being cared for by a stable staff team with which they have or are building positive and effective relationships. Consultation with young people is good. Staff gather young people's views on all aspects of the care and the running of the home. Admissions to the home are well managed. This is especially important because the home takes emergency admissions. Staff complete detailed risk assessments to make the moves as positive and stress free as possible. Young people are provided with a range of activities that are fun, purposeful and expand their experiences. Their engagement with these varies. Staff know the young people they care for well. They understand their needs and the strategies to address them. With the help of the organisation's therapist, staff devise clear plans that are linked to young people's identified needs, as detailed in referral documentation, review minutes, incidents or significant events. These are kept under review. One young person's plan was not as comprehensive as others. This was because of the poor response from the placing authority in providing information that had been requested repeatedly by the registered manager and the organisation's senior management. This has not impacted on the care the young person has received. Young people have regular keyworker sessions that cover topics specific to each young person. Records of these vary in quality. Some do not provide much detail of the discussion that took place. Young people's healthcare needs are well met. Where required, staff engage specialist services, for example on drug issues, which have been effective. Young people are making good progress in their education despite some having had long periods of non-school attendance before admission. Staff work with young people to develop their understanding of the importance of education, and they have high but realistic aspirations for them. Accommodation at the home is spacious. There has been some damage, which is being rectified. Young people are involved in repair and refurbishment choices.	

One young person spoke about how a gym was being put in one of the empty outbuildings at their request.

Staff act as advocates for young people when required. This includes challenging placing authorities to ensure that they fulfil their duty of care.

Staff enable young people to maintain contact with their families, providing transport and support where needed.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Safeguarding arrangements at the home are strong and are adhered to in practice. Staff interviewed demonstrated a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures. The team receive good-quality induction and ongoing training on a wide range of safeguarding issues. Safeguarding professionals praised the team for its work in this area. Visitors to the home are asked for identification, which the staff then verify. Young people's risk-taking behaviours have reduced since their admission but this work is ongoing. Staff work closely and effectively with fellow professionals to address these behaviours. Each young person has a detailed plan, with strategies for staff to follow to reduce these behaviours, and the actions staff should take when these behaviours occur. This is closely adhered to in practice. Missing person incidents are closely monitored and staff diligently follow young people's individual plans when they do go missing. These are bespoke plans and take into account the young people's vulnerability and degree of risk. These plans are reviewed after each incident of a young person going missing. When staff have heightened concern about a young person, they have swiftly involved the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and child sexual exploitation workers. Professionals who work with the staff praised them for their consistent and measured work, which can include following young people for considerable periods of time 'as a good parent would', said one professional. Individual behaviour management plans are in place and are kept under review. These are linked to young people's risk assessments and reflect lessons learned from incidents. Staff see young people's involvement in the plans as vital for	

developing their understanding of their behaviours and for developing self-management techniques.

Physical intervention is used only as a last resort. Within the records inspected, the majority contained all the required information in a clear and concise manner. There were three records where this did not apply. These used vague language to describe the behaviours that had led to the restraint, and one did not clearly record whether medical attention had been given. This was, however, recorded on the accident form but the restraint record made no cross-reference to this information.

Records of sanction are comprehensive. These demonstrate that sanctions are linked to the behaviours and include a restorative approach.

Young people feel safe at the home and have various staff and external professionals whom they can talk to. One young person said, 'Without this place, I would be dead or locked up by now.'

Effective recruitment procedures are in place and are closely followed to protect young people from adults who may wish to harm them. Currently, there is no explanation of what the scoring system for interviews means. This would clarify how a decision to employ is reached.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
Leaders and managers have met the recommendations from the last inspection. The registered manager has been in post since July 2014. The staff team spoke very positively about the registered manager, including the support they receive from them. Records inspected evidenced the registered manager's monitoring of work undertaken at the home. Although this monitoring has identified some gaps in records, it did not identify those shortfalls mentioned in this report. This reduces the effectiveness of the manager's monitoring. Some records were poorly organised, which means information cannot be easily found. Staffing levels at the home are appropriate to meet the needs of the young people placed. Since the last inspection, four new members of staff have taken up post and one is pending. Agency staff have been used to cover staff vacancies but the number of different agency staff has been kept to a minimum to provide continuity	

of care. Inspection of rotas supports this conclusion.

New staff undergo a comprehensive induction process that includes training before working in the home. This provided the foundation for the ongoing training and development of the staff team. The quality of training provided is good and responds to the emerging needs of the young people.

Staff supervision and appraisal were not looked at as part of this inspection. They will be evaluated at the interim inspection.

The statement of purpose accurately represents the work undertaken by the team. This, as well as policies and procedures, are reviewed at least annually to ensure that they reflect developments and changes to legislation and care practices.

Notifications of significant events are made appropriately and to the relevant bodies.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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