

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 large, private provider. It provides care for up to four children who may experience emotional or social difficulties. At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home.

The manager has been in post since December 2024 and recently registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 April 2025

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

Date of last inspection: 6 August 2024

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
06/08/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/08/2023	Full	Good
20/10/2022	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child told the inspector that they would have rated their home a 'three or four out of 10' a few months ago but would now give it a 'solid eight'. This is the child's testament to the improvements made.

The home has been through a significant amount of change, with changes of provider, staff and managers. This has had a detrimental impact on the child that lives here, causing them to be concerned about the number of staff leaving.

The number of staff changes has reduced since the current manager has been in post, and the child now knows who is coming into the home each day. The manager has ensured that there is a consistent core team of staff so that the child always has one adult they know. Attempts have also been made to use the same agency staff to provide consistency for the child. The child said that they feel listened to by the manager.

At times, the child has close relationships with the staff and feels that they can talk to them if they are worried. Positive relationships were observed, with the child and staff laughing and joking together. At times, staff gave mixed responses about the boundaries in place and how to respond to the child's needs or requests. Some staff and written plans lacked clarity on the goals and targets set to help the child to achieve.

One child has moved on from the home since the last inspection. While this was a planned move, the child moved sooner than expected. Staff supported the child well during this period and encouraged them to stay in touch.

The child living at the home attends alternative education and has a tutor. The manager has advocated for more hours of education for this child. However, there is little structure for the staff to provide informal educational activities, and it is left for the child to choose an activity. Staff encourage the child to develop their interests and hobbies, and there has been a strong focus on developing wider family relationships.

The child has healthy and varied meals. The child is involved in choosing and preparing meals, which supports their independence. Staff also encourage the child to understand budgeting for clothing and activities, helping them to understand and manage money.

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

The most significant change for the child is that they now feel safe in terms of knowing which members of staff are coming into the home. Having consistent and familiar staff has helped the child to develop nurturing relationships with the team. The child now has trusted adults they can talk to and who understand the risks to them.

Safeguarding incidents have significantly reduced since the last inspection. There have been no incidents of physical intervention or going missing from home. Staff have supported the child well to understand their feelings and manage their behaviours.

When a concern was raised between two children, this was reported to other professionals quickly and appropriately. There was a discussion with one of the children about the outcome of this, but it is not clear that an explanation was given to the other child. This means that children are not always clear about what happens as a result of a concern they raise or incidents that happen.

Staff are clear about safeguarding processes. They report that they contact managers quickly and know who to contact when there is a problem.

When children have self-harmed, there is a quick and supportive response from staff. Children's plans are clear about what staff need to do in these situations. Positive behaviours are encouraged and praised. However, there is no clear guidance to staff about types of rewards for certain behaviours.

Safer recruitment processes are in place for employed staff. In respect of agency staff, the checks are completed by the agency. These checks are relied on without leaders and managers assuring themselves fully or having sight of the actual recruitment documents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home now has a registered manager who is dedicated and determined. Staff morale has increased, and the turnover of staff has started to decline. Recruitment is ongoing, with three members about to join the team and further vacancies being advertised.

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for children, and the staff have confidence in their manager. The manager acts quickly and responds carefully, being sure not to make promises lightly. Action plans have been in place since the last inspection, which have been updated and reviewed regularly. This shows that leaders and managers strive for improvements. They are also keen to take advice on board.

Staff speak of being able to access managers and describe them as approachable and easy to contact. Management oversight of care has improved, although new systems are proving difficult to get used to. Learning has taken place from the staff leaving, and managers have been keen to listen to their views. While supervision is in

place, it does not always take place on time. However, staff feel able to report concerns quickly without waiting for formal supervision for this.

Children's records contain some out-of-date information and are often written from the child's perspective when the child has not been involved in writing them. This is not accurate or meaningful to the child and does not provide staff with the most relevant information to support the child.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;	30 May 2025

provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and

make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice.
(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is an agreed plan and for each child to have goals that they can achieve. Staff should be provided with clear guidance as to how to help each child to achieve their goals and have consistent boundaries and approaches to support each child.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure records of incidents and restraint are clear and do not contain vague, institutionalised or emotive language. In addition, meaningful conversations should be carried out with any child or member of staff involved so as to enable them to reflect and learn from the event. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that when children are not in education, they work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the meantime, the child should be supported to regain their confidence in education and be engaged in structured, educational activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that the necessary recruitment information required under Schedule 2 is obtained for all staff who work in the home, including agency staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that systems are in place so that all staff receive regular supervision of their practice, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children in their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records are 'living documents' and that staff are recording information in a way that is meaningful to children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

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: Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway,
Halesowen B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Tamara Pearcey

Registered manager: Andrew Grant

Inspector

Nickie Doney, Social Care Inspector

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