

SC407430

Registered provider: Wessex College Limited

Assurance 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 who have social and emotional needs. At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

The registered manager post has been vacant since April 2024. A new manager has been appointed and started in post on 10 December 2024.

Inspection date: 19 December 2024

Date of last inspection: 6 August 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'.

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 same two children continue to live at the home, having lived there for two years. Both children spoke with the inspector and said they are happy living at the home, despite the ongoing changes in the staff team. They said they are pleased that some of the core staff team have remained, as they have strong relationships with them. They are getting to know the new manager and know there are more new staff starting.

Both children have made progress. Incidents of self-harm have reduced, and both children are enjoying their education, with one attending college and the other attending an alternative education provision. One child is planning for their future, with staff support. Both children spoke about their Christmas plans, which they were looking forward to. They also spoke about what they have been doing since the previous inspection. One child said they are really enjoying fishing and they have joined a local fishing and angling club where they are making friends.

Children's plans have been reviewed, updated and improved. These now provide clear and consistent information for staff on the children's needs and how these are to be met.

Children feel safe at the home. Staff demonstrated their safeguarding knowledge and clearly understand how to manage safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding investigations are now completed in a timely manner and the quality of the investigation reports has improved. These are now detailed and contain the information required, including evidence of action taken. Investigations now include clear actions for the person who is subject to the investigation and identify if there is any wider learning for the team or organisation.

Behaviour is appropriately managed, however, further improvement is needed in the recording of incidents and restraint. Currently, these contain vague, institutional and emotive language which does not provide a clear picture of the event. In addition, staff do not ensure that meaningful conversations consistently take place with the children and staff involved in incidents, to support them to reflect on the event, understand why this happened and to look at how this could be prevented in the future. By not doing this, there is a missed learning opportunity.

A new manager, deputy manager and responsible individual have been appointed. They have the same shared vision for the home. They are consulting with the children and staff to understand the areas for improvement. Some progress has been made to improve the home, but this has been hampered by staff leaving and there being no manager in post. Improvements need time to embed.

Recruiting staff remains an ongoing issue. Currently, there are three core staff plus the new manager. A small group of agency staff are being used, to provide some consistency for children. The organisation has provided those staff who are leaving with an exit interview, which is then reviewed for learning and development.

The quality and frequency of staff supervision are improving but leaders and managers acknowledge this work is ongoing and needs time to embed in practice. Records of supervision sessions demonstrate this is a two-way process which focuses on the children and staff development and training. Clear actions for staff development are set.

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

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 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— 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and	28 February 2025

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	
---	--

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure records of incidents and restraint are clear and do not contain vague, institutional or emotive language. In addition, meaningful conversations should be carried out with any child or member of staff involved, 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)

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 BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Tamara Pearcey

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024