

SC407430

Registered provider: Wessex College

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

- The home can provide care for up to four children aged over 11 years who may have experienced trauma and/or abuse, and who may have attachment difficulties.
- This home is one of six homes operated by a private organisation. The organisation also owns a school and a farm, which children from this home may attend.
- The home has not had a registered manager since September 2018. Leaders and managers took reasonable steps to recruit a manager. A new manager commenced in their post in May 2019 and intends to submit an application to register with Ofsted.

Some children who live in this home are far away from their home area.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 May 2019

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: 24 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/10/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2016	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
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff– seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5(a)(b)(c)(d))	03/07/2019
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– helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to–	03/07/2019

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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(h))	
32: Fitness of workers For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained– the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is– in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32(4)(a)(b), (5)(a)(b))	03/07/2019
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees– undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b)(c))	03/07/2019
44: Independent person: visits and reports The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person’s report to– HMCI. (Regulation 44(7)(a))	03/07/2019

Inspection judgements

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

The leadership and management of the home requires improvement to ensure that children have good overall experiences and make consistently good progress. The home has been without a registered manager since September 2018. While sufficient interim management arrangements are in place, the home lacks a strong leader with effective oversight. This weakness leaves too many gaps. However, despite these weaknesses, children are starting to make better progress than they were before.

Children are making swifter progress than before because staff now understand children's previous experiences. Well-thought-out therapeutic plans help staff to care for children in a way that meets their individual needs. The therapy team spends time with children and staff to role-model positive parenting. This has a positive impact on children's progress and experiences.

Children are becoming more engaged. For example, children have become increasingly eager to spend time in therapy sessions and all of the children have successfully increased their time in education, with some of them sitting exams for the first time in their lives. Relationships between children are becoming more positive and children are now living together more harmoniously.

Staff think more effectively about the environment and how it meets children's therapeutic needs. Redecoration is ongoing. However, the atmosphere is homelier than before. New swings in the garden mean that children are spending more time outside, and there are more board games and toys for them to play with. Over the past two months, children have been having more positive experiences in the home.

The whole team thinks together about different ways in which they can help children to achieve their short- and term goals. Any success is celebrated accordingly.

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

Serious behavioural incidents have occurred since the previous inspection. These incidents have had a negative impact on children involved in them, as well as to those witnessing them. Positively, leaders and managers have thought about how they can better support children therapeutically with increased and more focused support from the integrated therapy team. This has been successful, as none of the children have needed to move on, behaviour has improved and serious incidents have decreased in the past three months.

During a three-month period in 2018-2019, staff were unable to support children effectively with their behaviour. This resulted in children's behaviour escalating to such a high risk that the police were called to the home. During these incidents, staff sustained

injuries from children and children harmed themselves.

Children's experiences of the police being called to the home have not been positive and included incidents of children spending time in police custody. Following these incidents, leaders and managers successfully met with the local police force to discuss police involvement in children's lives. Since this meeting, police have not been called to the home for a behavioural incident.

With frequent support from the therapy team, staff are thinking more about why children behave in the way they do and what staff need to do to best support them. More positive ways of supporting children are now used more frequently and replace punitive sanctions. Children respond well to positive praise, sticker charts, routine, structure and boundaries. These approaches make this a more positive and calm home to live in.

Not enough thought has gone into how to support children who are living far away from home when they go missing. While staff work hard to find children and liaise frequently with external professionals when they are missing, there is no agreed plan to confirm which agency will conduct an independent return-home interview. As such, children do not always receive an independent return-home interview, missing opportunities for leaders and managers to understand ways to help the children more effectively.

Risk is well understood by staff, who are sufficiently trained in child protection. Children develop positive relationships with certain staff, whom they gravitate to. These staff use these opportunities to parent children about safety and risks. Regular discussions about social media, substance misuse, missing and sexual health and development help children to gradually become safer.

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

Leaders and managers have not identified a suitable person to lead and manage the home. The interim management arrangements were adequate, yet did not provide the strong leadership needed in this home. Good action was taken to recruit a manager, and a new manager was appointed in May 2019.

The absence of a manager has limited the amount of progress that leaders and managers have been able to achieve. The responsible individual has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has an effective action plan in place to address the weaknesses.

Management oversight has lacked consistency. Not all records are reviewed within a good enough time frame, and the reviews that are completed lack depth and quality. This means that leaders and managers do not always fully understand the impact and quality of care to children. In addition, independent visitor reports are not sent to Ofsted in a timely manner as required.

Without a manager, insufficient action has been taken to hold other agencies to account. This means that children have not always received the services that they could have

expected. For example, independent return-home interviews are not always conducted and one child does not have an education, health and care plan. These weaknesses remain unchallenged.

Leaders and managers are not consistently providing staff with formal support, as required. Three members of staff have not achieved their level 3 qualification within the required timeframe. Staff have not had their performance appraised annually and not everyone receives regular line management supervision. Some, but not enough, effort is made to address these shortfalls. In contrast, staff debriefings from incidents and clinical supervision have increased.

A core group of staff now makes up the team. This is significant progress and provides children with more consistency of care. Leaders and managers have improved the induction given to new staff to provide them with all mandatory training before they care for children. Therefore, staff are more skilled and the number of different staff working within the home has decreased.

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 difference 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: 4 Cedar Park, Cobham Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne BH21 7SF

Responsible individual: Joanne Sams

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nicola Lownds, social care inspector

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