

SC407430

Registered provider: Wessex College Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

'Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.'

We last visited this setting on 27 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be 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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 10 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/10/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Outcomes for children are mixed. Two children are settled and making progress. However, one child had to move from the home recently as the staff were unable to safely manage this child's relationship with another child living at the home.

Care plans comprehensively detail the care needs of the children. However, the plans do not state the aims of the child's placement at the home or how these aims will be met, and do not detail targets and timescales.

The staff do not always support children to get up in the morning and purposefully undertake a daily routine. One child does not have structure to their day as they are not yet in full-time education. Staff do not always ensure that there is a constructive timetable in place for each day so that the child will channel their energy positively.

The staff work with education professionals effectively. The children have individual educational programmes and are in the process of increasing the number of hours of education they receive, but the aim is for all to achieve a full timetable.

The staff succeed in supporting the children to rebuild and maintain relationships with their families. One child is now enjoying regular weekends at their family home.

The children are encouraged to voice their views and opinions and make suggestions about how to improve the home. Recently, they have been involved in choosing new sofas for the lounge.

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

It has been an unsettled time in the home recently, as two children were going missing together regularly. However, the staff followed the missing-from-home procedure effectively and worked collaboratively with the police to ensure that the children always returned home safely. Following discussion with the children's placing authorities, it was agreed that the mix of children in the home was not appropriate, and one child moved out of the home. As a result, incidents of going missing from the home are now reduced.

Risks are comprehensively assessed and effective control measures put in place to manage risks associated with the children. Behaviour management plans and policies are comprehensive. The staff are clear about what action they should take to consistently manage any incidents.

Comprehensive recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable people are employed at the home. Extensive checks and documents are obtained prior to a person coming to work at the home.

Safeguarding incidents are promptly reported to the relevant professionals. The manager has a positive working relationship with the police, youth offending team and safeguarding professionals, should a safeguarding concern about a child arise.

The children report that they feel safe living at the home and could name a member of staff that they could speak to if they felt worried or unsafe.

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

The manager is well respected by the staff team. The staff comment on the high quality of support that she offers them and on her child-focused approach. The staff benefit from extensive training in all areas necessary in order for them to care for the children, such as around safeguarding and first aid. The staff also benefit from regular supervision and annual appraisals to ensure effective staff development.

Managers undertake an impact risk assessment for a child who may move to the home. However, it is not always clear why a decision has been made that a child referred is a good match for the existing children living in the home. It is not clearly documented how the staff will safely manage any potential risks that may arise from the children living together.

On one occasion, Ofsted was not notified about a serious incident in the home, as required by the regulations.

The home has an institutional appearance in some areas, such as the office and the windows, which are fitted with institutional restrictors. Some areas of the home require refurbishment. These shortfalls detract from the generally homely appearance of the home.

Some documents and reports that may be seen by the children in the future contain institutional language. The manager is aware of this issue and is working with the staff to improve their awareness of their use of language.

The home benefits from having a full staff team and is no longer using agency staff. The staff either hold an appropriate childcare qualification or are currently undertaking the relevant course to obtain this qualification.

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
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard of paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)) This particularly refers to ensuring that a comprehensive impact risk assessment is completed prior to a child moving to the home.	21 May 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(v))	21 May 2021

This particularly refers to ensuring that the children have a structure to their day and are supported to benefit from having clear expectations about a daily routine.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	21 May 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home provides a homely and domestic environment and that any damage is promptly repaired. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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 BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Samantha Choules

Registered manager: Claire Bates

Inspector

Tina Maddison, Social Care Inspector

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