

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC038719
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Secure Unit
Registered person	Hampshire County Council
Registered person address	Hampshire County Council, The Castle, WINCHESTER, Hampshire, SO23 8ZB

Responsible individual	Mrs Susan Lomax
Registered manager	Mr John Stacey
Inspector	Shaun Common

Inspection date	20/10/2015
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	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
outcomes in education and related learning activities	Good

SC038719

Summary of findings

The children's home is good because:

- The home's Participation Strategy is effective. Young people are included and their views valued.
- The manager has a very clear plan for the continued development of the home. He has addressed a number of shortfalls in the service. He is child-focused and has a vision and desire to provide an outstanding service to young people.
- Very good relationships exist between staff and young people. Staff are good role models, enthusiastic and well supported by managers.
- Despite significant changes at the home, managers and staff's focus on wanting to deliver high quality care and ensuring young people are at the centre of all they do is very much apparent.
- Young people have a good range of interesting and purposeful activities that they can engage in and enjoy.
- In education, teaching, learning and assessment are good. Young people make good progress taking into account their starting points.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; (b) are kept up to date; and (c) are signed and dated by the author of each entry. <p>Case records must be kept—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) if the child dies before attaining the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of the child's death; (b) in cases not falling within sub-paragraph (a), for 75 years from the child's date of birth; (c) securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there; and (d) in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. <p>(Regulation 36 (1)(2))</p>	20/11/2015
<p>Ensure restraint in relation to a child is necessary and proportionate; specifically, ensure staff only use physical restraint techniques that they are trained to use, unless the methods are used as there is no alternative to safeguarding staff and young people and they are used appropriately, reasonably, proportionately and scrutinised by managers. (Regulation 20 (2))</p>	20/11/2015
<p>Maintain the system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The quality of care provided to children <p>Specifically, ensuring the system for monitoring restraint practices in the home identifies any shortfalls or concerns about practices and identifies any learning points. (Regulation 45 (2)(a))</p>	20/11/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. Where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals and opportunities to sit together and eat should be promoted; in particular, ensure that children do not have to choose their menu too far in advance. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.8)
- ensure the independent person makes a rigorous assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the home's care; in particular, robustly assess records of physical restraint and satisfy themselves the home's practices are appropriate (The Guide to the Quality Standards, Page 65, paragraph 15.4)
- ensure the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, improve facilities and opportunities to sample vocational education to help them identify progression routes to employment on leaving the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- ensure the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, develop the use of IT further to ensure information about young people's attendance, progress and achievements is recorded efficiently and is easily accessible to support personal development and educational progress. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- ensure the ethos of the home supports each child to learn, specifically, working across education and care, consolidate work that has been initiated to support the emotional development and evaluate its impact. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. As well as the living accommodation, education is provided on site in dedicated facilities. The children's home can accommodate up to 16 young people, who are aged between 10 and 17 years. Up to four young people who have received a custodial sentence can be placed at this home by the Youth Justice Board. Other young people are the subject of Section 25 of The Children Act 1989 and placed by local authorities. Admission of any young person under section 25 of The Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

This inspection has the purpose of informing the Secretary of State on the continuing suitability for this provision to operate as a secure unit to restrict children's liberty.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2014	CH - Full	Good
23/06/2014	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/03/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
22/01/2014	CH - Full	Inadequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Young people are cared for in comfortable, well equipped surroundings. The new furniture was chosen by young people, as was the colour scheme and décor. This provides young people with a sense of ownership and belonging. They are able to decorate their bedrooms with posters and artwork to their taste if they so wish, but have not taken advantage of this opportunity as yet. However, signs of settling in are beginning with some young people starting to personalise their rooms.</p> <p>The nurturing and enthusiastic staff team encourage young people to engage in the range of activities available to them. These include sharing sporting activities in the recreation room, gymnasium or on the football pitch. Close links with a local professional football team particularly benefit young people. This allows young people to gain sporting skills while improving their health and fitness. Young people’s self-esteem and belief in their abilities improve as a result. A manager said, ‘He made huge progress; he ended up on a full exit programme where he was going out twice a week to play football at Southampton FC. He completed his Duke of Edinburgh Award.’</p> <p>Young people who are ‘less sporty’ are able to participate in other activities that promote skills and learning while having fun. These include the use of the music room for recording and developing their own ‘rap’ music as well as exploring poetry and art work. For some young people this is an introduction to a new and exciting world where they discover they have talents and learn more appropriate ways of controlling impetuous behaviours. A young person said, ‘I like that the music room is here so I can do some recording. I feel I’ve learnt lessons about my temper and ways of not losing it so easily.’</p> <p>Young people report that they like the food provided to them and that it is of good quality. They are encouraged to eat together and the majority do so. However, a number of young people were unhappy at having to make food choices for the whole week on a Sunday evening. They said that they did not always remember what they had ordered and had often changed their mind once the meal arrived. There were also occasions when food did not come from the kitchen as expected causing frustration. This has the potential to lead to upset and conflict.</p> <p>The staff team are well supported by a skilled and committed management team.</p>	

All of the staff know the young people in their care well and are ambitious for them to achieve to the best of their ability. This proactive tailored care ensures that young people are making positive progress in a number of areas of their lives including education, physical and emotional health and building self-esteem and positive relationships. One young person's progress was described as said, 'When he first came he was so depressed. We eventually got him to the point where he could go out and talk to people without hitting them because they looked at him wrong.'

There is a marked inconsistency in recording and content on young people's files. Although other evidence shows young people do make good progress and have good experiences, records do not allow for comprehensive evaluation of young people's progress to take place.

None of the young people in the home have been resident for long. Nevertheless, as a result of the good caring and role modelling provided by staff they have been able to form positive, trusting relationships. This empowers young people to start addressing the issues that have led to them being accommodated in secure care. They grow in self-esteem and start to like themselves. A social worker commented, '(Name) has settled better than professionals expected she would' and a young person said, 'I feel I can trust the staff here and know they will take care of me and make sure nobody hurts me.'

Young people's feelings of well-being and sense of self improve as they engage with the evidence based therapeutic model employed. This enables them to identify and explore their strengths and develop an understanding of painful emotional issues. The new group work programme due to commence shortly, will enable them to work on their psychological needs. The planned sleep hygiene work is a programme that helps young people to make the most of their rest, promoting energy and enthusiasm. Effective partnership working with appropriate psychological services further promotes young people's well-being and emotional health. A young person said, 'I feel really happy here and so safe that I haven't hurt myself for 14 days. I'm really proud of that because that's the longest I can remember going for a long time.'

The promotion of a healthy lifestyle and links with specialist and generic health professionals enables young people to understand and improve their physical health. For example, the inclusive involvement of all young people with substance misuse services allows them to engage without feeling singled out. They are prepared well for moving on by the home's nurse with information on local health services. This is supplied on an application for their mobile telephones thereby increasing the chances that they will use the information. A youth offending team (YOT) worker said, 'Since being here his physical appearance has improved. I had

been unable to get him engaged in a substance misuse service but the home has managed to do so and this is very positive for his future.'

Close links with a local sexual health clinic along with sensitive support from staff allows young people to address any concerns safely. This effectively promotes their sexual health and well-being. The knowledge they gain from this experience benefits them now and in their future adult lives.

Young people are encouraged to be actively involved in life at the home and in how the home runs. They have been involved in the recruitment for new staff. One young person chaired the interview panel for all recent newly recruited staff. Young people feel valued and that their wishes and feelings are worthwhile as a result. This improves young people's confidence in their abilities to communicate effectively and builds self-esteem. A YOT worker said, 'The staff recognise the young person's strengths.'

The home's Participation Strategy aims to 'show young people they matter and are valued; improve decision making and quality of care; improve safeguarding; enhance relationships and reduce conflict and to make services child-centred.' Young people's individual progress and involvement in a range of positive inclusive activities demonstrate that they are meeting these aims.

Young people's cultural and diverse requirements are well met. For example, young people are able to celebrate Ramadan and there are positive relationships with the local Imam. As a result, young people are supported to follow their chosen religion. The ethnically diverse staff team employ a range of innovative methods to fully meet each young person's individual needs. As a result of their imaginative approach one young person, who could not speak English, left the home able to tell the time and when to take his medication thereby reducing the number of epileptic seizures he had from 16 a day to less than one a week. Young people are therefore empowered. They learn social and life skills through effective care and support.

Some young people transfer to a young offenders institute or adult custodial provision. The caring, proactive staff team recognise that this will be a major change and carefully prepare them for the move. As a result young people are confident that they are ready and have the personal strength and social skills to achieve in their next setting. A manager said, 'He continued to engage with us until the end. When he first came he was very guarded and did not trust but then developed really close relationships with education and care staff. We prepared him for that transition and he did really well.' The Registered Manager is a member of the Regional Resettlement Consortium, whose role it is to monitor the resettlement of young people from custodial settings. His involvement ensures that

he is aware of any particular resources that might be available to the young people.

A number of young people are located some distance from their homes. The proactive management team recognise the impact this has on their well-being and use matching carefully to allow young people to have positive links within their peer group. Contact with family members is sensitively supported where it is appropriate for young people, allowing them to maintain important community links. A social worker stated, '(Name) always tries to include families and encourage family contact which is essential.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Young people feel safe. They raised no issues with inspectors about their wellbeing or safety. They say they can talk to staff about any issues or concerns they have. Young people did not raise any concerns about bullying. There have been incidents of bullying which have been appropriately challenged with implemented strategies to help keep young people safe. Records are kept of any incidents and restorative practices are used where possible and appropriate to repair relationships.</p> <p>There have been three child protection incidents since the last inspection. All have been managed in line with the home's procedures, which helps to keep young people safe. Matters were referred to the local authority and relevant professionals in a timely manner. Records are kept of all incidents.</p> <p>The home cares for young people who have been subject of, or at risk of child sexual exploitation. Staff have undertaken awareness training and managers are aware of their responsibilities. The Registered Manager is in the process of obtaining information from other sources as to what they deliver for and liaising with a provider over delivery of specific interventions for young people. This work is on-going and the manager hopes to have this in place in the very near future.</p> <p>There are good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The manager reports to the Board's quality assurance sub-committee in relation to restraint practices. This provides a layer of independent scrutiny and challenge. There are good links with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the senior managers in the local authority who provide advice and oversight of</p>	

safeguarding issues.

The home is in the early stages of securing arrangements for implementing the government's 'Prevent' agenda. The Registered Manager understands the duties set out in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty Guidance issued by government. Plans are underway to source relevant training for all staff and to ensure appropriate links are established with the police counter-terrorism team.

Assessment upon admission highlights any vulnerabilities of young people and risks of suicide and self-harm. Plans and risk assessments are regularly reviewed and always reviewed after any incident. A significant incident occurred during the inspection and this was seen to be managed effectively by staff. Interventions by staff and subsequent processes and procedures, that included other agencies and professionals, ensured the young person was supported to stay safe. Processes are in place to ensure young people are always closely supervised and monitored in line with their needs.

Positive behaviour is promoted and encouraged. An incentive scheme is in place that young people know and understand. Points are earned for positive behaviour against objectives. Young people can progress through the scheme from bronze to platinum levels with increasing rewards and privileges that reinforces good behaviour. A new merit scheme introduced through consultation with young people means staff can reward young people with a merit that can then be used to attain further appropriate rewards. A recording system has been introduced that evidences how staff use rewards to acknowledge young people's achievements.

Sanctions are used by staff where young people's behaviour is inappropriate. Sanctions are relevant to the misdemeanour. Young people are given the opportunity to sign or write comments on the records which encourages them to develop understanding and responsibility. A restorative approach is evident in practice. Young people are encouraged and supported to 'make good' what they have done wrong. For example, by writing a letter of apology.

Physical restraint is used in line with regulations. Appropriate records are kept of all incidents. Young people and staff are supported through debriefs carried out after any incident.

Restraint used by staff on the majority of occasions is appropriate. On some occasions, it has not been in line with the home's approved methods. There were five occasions in the last two months where staff have physically restrained a young person and then lifted and carried the young person from one area to another. Staff endeavoured to ensure young people were safe at all times. However, carrying a young person while holding onto limbs is not a method

endorsed by the training commissioned and has associated risks.

Managers examine all incidents using records and closed-circuit television (CCTV). These five incidents were reviewed but no concerns or shortfalls were identified during monitoring as recorded on the relevant forms by a manager. In addition to managers carrying out checks, an independent person assesses restraint practices during monthly visits. They did not identify any concerns. Other incidents reviewed on CCTV by inspectors contained learning points for staff. The recorded monitoring by managers and the independent persons report did not raise any issues. The Registered Manager has taken action. He has instructed staff that lifting and carrying young people is not appropriate and has ensured that measures have been taken to more robustly monitor restraint incidents. He has raised with local authority managers the need for the restraint method used by the home to be reviewed as it currently does not provide staff with ways of holding young people safely if a restraint does go to the floor, and then recovering from that position.

There have been two incidents of a young person absconding since the last inspection. These incidents occurred while the young person was on planned and approved mobility. Staff followed the home's procedures and relevant agencies were promptly notified. The young person has since left the home and the relevant records have not been retained.

Single separation is very well recorded and used in line with government guidance. Records show clearly the reasons for any use, that the criteria are met throughout the incident, that observations are in line with risk assessments and how the matter comes to an end. Managers monitor any use closely to ensure it is justified and appropriate.

There are occasions when the 'managing away' procedure is used. This involves managing a young person away from their peers and/or normal routine due to risks they pose to themselves or others. Managing away can be in a lounge or sometimes a bedroom corridor depending on circumstances, risk assessment and what is most suitable. The process endeavours to ensure that young people return to their normal routine as soon as it is appropriate to do so. Use of managing away is fully recorded with the rationale, though all records are not as clear as they could be. As this process and procedure is new, the manager advised that staff are still adapting to it and learning what is needed. Guidance about recording is being provided by the manager along with oversight and monitoring to ensure this improves.

The home has a policy and procedure for searching young people's rooms and communal areas. This is in line with balancing the needs of young people with the safety and security of the home. Searching of young people involves use of an electronic wand and pat-down only. Searches of young people or their rooms are recorded and show the rationale, anything found and actions taken.

A number of staff have been recruited to work at the home since the last inspection. Records kept of the checks carried out demonstrate a robust process. This shows the home follows a process to help ensure they employ the right people to work with vulnerable children.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The home is run by a well-qualified, experienced and skilled manager. He is supported by two team managers, two assistant team leaders and eight team supervisors. The manager was Registered with Ofsted in May 2014 and since that time there have been a number of changes. There is an entirely new management team and a number of staff at all levels have moved on, some through capability procedures. The Registered Manager is a member of the national Health and Justice Children’s Assurance Group and a local multi-agency group responsible for the implementation of a county-wide ‘Joint Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy’. He is a member of the senior management team within Children’s Services in the local authority and represents the home, ensuring it is not isolated from developments elsewhere in the authority.</p> <p>Managers and staff have shown a clear desire and commitment to improvement. All requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. This has resulted in positive changes to the living environment, staff consistently managing and challenging negative behaviour, a positive increase in the use of restorative practices and close monitoring of child protection matters to ensure they are dealt with in a timely manner.</p> <p>The home’s Statement of Purpose was reviewed and updated in June 2015. This was approved by local authority elected members and a copy forwarded to Ofsted. This comprehensive document sets out the aims and objectives of the home and the range of services to be provided to young people. The information pack available to parents and carers is also very good and includes a range of relevant information including; equality and diversity, visits, behaviour management, complaints and the safeguarding procedure.</p> <p>The manager has for the most part, a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and the approaches taken with previous management teams. He has systematically addressed a number of shortfalls and</p>	

inadequacies in the service and continues on a journey of improvement and future development. It is evident that the management team are committed to improving service provision.

The quality assurance and monitoring reflect a clearly thought through process for checking practices on a daily, weekly, monthly and six monthly basis. The information gathered is analysed, evaluated and informs practice improvement and development. These processes did not quickly identify shortfalls in restraint practices and case recording. The procedures for the auditing of the quality of case files has not resulted in sufficient improvement in the standard of recording and availability of information.

All managers now have a range of duties, tasks and areas of responsibilities delegated to them. It is evident that senior managers are aware of the strengths and skills of staff and ensure they are encouraged to utilise these skills in their roles. The result is that the management team and care staff group work in an inclusive environment where everyone's views are considered. Middle managers and staff feel that they are part of a large team who are working collectively to continually improve practice and care for young people. This reflects a strong and confident management style by the Registered Manager, who clearly works to the strengths of his team.

Recent recruitment has resulted in some very enthusiastic, skilled and capable staff being employed to work with young people. They bring with them a range of skills that are clearly providing positive additions to the team. Their suggestions for new activities and experiences for young people are enhancing self-esteem, confidence and skills.

Induction training and on-going support for new staff have been good and are appreciated by them. The induction of 11 new staff at once is unusual for a residential childcare setting, but has been of value to new staff who felt the group approach was extremely beneficial to them. The result is that staff are well prepared for the role.

The senior management team are aware that recently not all managers have been sufficiently available on the unit working within close proximity to care staff. This was raised by care staff with inspectors, though staff feel that some duty officers are very visible and accessible to them. The Registered Manager plans to ensure assistant team leaders are located on each living unit and at the time of inspection was directing duty officers to work more consistently on each unit. The hope is this will provide further support for staff and consistency in care for young people.

Staff teams in recent weeks have been comprised of mainly newly appointed staff

and an experienced duty officer, though some newly appointed staff have experience of working with young people. Managers have appropriately planned rotas to ensure a balance of skills, experience and gender. They have rightly on a number of occasions, increased the staffing levels to ensure young people are cared for appropriately and safely.

New staff have been described by managers at all levels as a 'breath of fresh air', with their contribution to the running of the home and their work with young people described as 'phenomenal'. Young people have also been positive about the staff caring for them. Staff show a real commitment to the young people. Their concerns and insecurities are discussed with managers and the psychologist who supports them providing advice on a two-weekly basis. Staff are recognised and praised for the good work they are doing. The result is a growing level of confidence and competence with a largely inexperienced staff group who are showing remarkable resilience in working with young people presenting complex challenging behaviours and needs.

There are good support mechanisms in place with supervision now available to staff on a monthly basis, and more for those who are new and require additional input. Staff supervision has improved significantly in the last six months. The home now achieves 92% for monthly supervision. Managers are now focusing on ensuring the quality of the supervision sessions and subsequent recordings are of a high standard.

Training and development of staff in the home is good. There is a clear workforce plan to continue to inform recruitment, induction, training and the development of the staff team. There is a comprehensive training and development plan and staff attend mandatory training, such as physical restraint, first aid and fire safety. Plans are in place for additional training for the coming year, which will include input from the new health care providers who begin to deliver services shortly. The number of qualified staff has decreased due to leavers and new staff being appointed. All staff who are not yet suitably qualified have either been referred for the appropriate course, or will be referred shortly after they have concluded their induction period.

The Registered Manager is actively involved with a range of external bodies and groups whose role impacts positively on the services in the home. He has worked closely with NHS England commissioners to ensure that the improved healthcare provision shortly to be provided is the best it can be to meet the needs of the young people. The healthcare services to be available are a significant improvement in terms of resources than has previously been the case.

	Judgement grade
Outcomes in education and related learning activities is	Good
<p>Education is provided through a service level agreement with Hampshire County Council’s Education Inclusion Service. Leadership and management of the Education provision is good. The head of education and staff benefit from the support and challenge provided by the inclusion service as well as staff development and training opportunities. The head of education makes good use of the Secure Accommodation Network to support developments through discussions and visits to other units. The education centre has good links with local mainstream schools and a productive working relationship with the local college which helps young people prepare for progressing to further education or training on leaving the home.</p> <p>Staff assess young people’s attainment in English and mathematics carefully shortly after arrival. Further assessments are carried out sensitively by teachers to ascertain their starting points across subject areas including practical skills in, for example, craft, design and technology (CDT) and physical education (PE). Assessments are used well by managers and teachers to plan education, ensuring young people receive appropriate support and encouragement whilst working to achieve realistic targets. Education staff are very supportive of young people. At the time of the inspection, they were implementing new procedures to determine young people’s emotional state. The purpose is to enable both education and care staff to identify and focus on specific areas requiring improvement such as self-awareness, empathy and social skills. These assessments are already helping young people consider their own behaviour and are helping education and care staff establish a common view of behaviour and support needs.</p> <p>Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers are patient and encouraging, particularly with young people who are initially reluctant to participate in education. They are continuously looking for small improvements through which to support personal development. Teachers use initial assessments and other information well when preparing lessons. They are careful to ensure the tasks they set are appropriate for young people, many of whom have attainment levels two to three years below their chronological age and some significantly lower due to histories of poor engagement and erratic or poor attendance. Teachers plan lessons carefully and are skilled at adapting their intentions depending on the responsiveness of young people. They continuously look for topics and projects which interest and motivate them. Teachers in art, craft, design and technology (CDT), food technology and music are particularly successful in this respect and young people enjoy their practical work and are proud of the things</p>	

they produce. Teachers make good use of opportunities to reinforce learning in English and mathematics through relating these subjects to practical and vocational topics across the curriculum. Young people's work is marked carefully and teachers provide useful comments to help them improve and further their learning. Teachers and learning support assistants work together well in supporting young people in the classroom, which helps young people remain focused on their work.

Outcomes for young people are good. By far the majority make good progress during their time at the home including, on average, two national curriculum sub levels in English and mathematics over a three months stay. Young people make particularly good progress in art, producing work of a high standard whilst also often expressing their thoughts and feelings and surprising themselves by what they can achieve. Likewise they learn to use hand tools well in CDT and are proud of the pens, leatherwork, models and gifts they produce. They develop valuable life skills in food technology and gain in confidence as well as fitness through regular sessions in the gym and fitness room. The personal and social skills of most young people improves considerably during their stay and they benefit from the high expectations of staff and the routines and boundaries of education life. Teachers use an appropriate range of accreditation including GCSE, functional skills and entry level certificates and they work hard to provide continuity for young people returning to mainstream schools.

Teachers track young people's progress carefully recording progress, achievements and behaviour during each lesson. Tracking information provides a useful overview of the progress made by each young person and informs weekly discussions with their personal tutors where targets for improvement are agreed. The information is also used as part of an incentives system which recognises effort and good behaviour. Although tracking information is helping improve outcomes for young people, best use is not made of information and communication technology (ICT) to simplify its gathering, processing and use.

The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities across Key Stages 3 and 4 including art, personal, social and health education (PSHE), food technology, CDT and physical education (PE). There is a strong emphasis on English mathematics and science that ensures continuity with mainstream schools. Although young people have opportunities to develop practical skills in work related topics, opportunities for vocational education are limited. Where appropriate, young people who are approaching the end of their stay have opportunities to sample vocational training and work experience through arrangements with a local college and local employers. Opportunities for young people to develop their understanding of PSHE and citizenship are provided across the curriculum and good use is made of cross-curriculum themes to focus on particular anniversaries or events. The rugby world cup was used to good effect

and cross-curriculum work on the themes of bonfire night and Armistice Day were being planned by teachers at the time of the inspection.

Teaching accommodation is comfortable and welcoming and almost all areas are well equipped and used well by staff. Young people's work is evident and displayed well celebrating their achievements. Facilities for food technology, although well organised and used well by staff, are cramped, limit curriculum options and require updating. The engineering and construction workshop provides good accommodation for developing vocational aspects of the curriculum, but was out of commission at the time of the inspection. Managers are considering how to use and develop this area.

Enrichment and holiday activities are well-planned with clearly stated learning aims which link well to the curriculum and are enjoyed by young people. Young people evaluate all holiday activities and contribute to their development. Education support assistants are careful to ensure new and interesting activities are available for young people who are resident for longer periods. Activities support the personal, social and health development of young people well and staff make good use of external organisations to ensure variety. They include work on the implications of affiliation to gangs, sexual health and misuse of drugs and alcohol. The local college provides valuable sessions in areas such as hair and beauty and motor vehicle maintenance, and opportunities provided by Southampton Football Club help young people understand business and enterprise through topics they enjoy. Charity work is a regular theme and young people enjoyed contributing to a Macmillan Coffee Morning held during the week of the inspection. Young people's behaviour was excellent; they enjoyed talking to visitors and the activity contributed well to their personal development. Fun activities and sport are regular daily features during holiday periods.

Young people now have good access to careers advice and guidance. An officer from Hampshire Careers Employability visits the education centre regularly and contributes to enrichment activities. This provides opportunities to talk to young people informally. Mobility arrangements are used well to help prepare young people for leaving the home. They include where appropriate, opportunities for young people to extend their learning.

Standards of behaviour are mostly good. Residential and education staff share information at the start and end of the education day. Education staff know the young people well and are skilled in identifying changes in mood or behaviour early and responding appropriately. Inappropriate behaviour and language are challenged and managed well. Staff are skilled in de-escalating potentially harmful situations and work well as a team ensuring young people are treated fairly and consistently as was observed in a lesson during the inspection. Weekly assemblies are used well to celebrate young people's successes and develop social skills. Attendance is recorded and monitored carefully and the level of refusal to

participate in education was relatively low at 10% last academic year. However, the actual time young people spent in class was 75% due to authorised absences, some of which could be avoided through careful management of professional health and care visits.

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 looked after children 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 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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