

1241840

Registered provider: Wessex College

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for four young people. The young people may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 November 2017

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: 21 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- The quality of record-keeping at the home is inconsistent. This includes records of restraints.
- Not all children are receiving education.
- The manager failed to identify the weaknesses found during the inspection. The use of monitoring systems requires improvement.
- Notifications to HMCI do not contain full and clear information that identifies the key issues and areas for future development.
- The reports from the independent visitor are not sent to HMCI in a timely manner.
- The staff team is fairly new, so some improvements have not yet been fully embedded in practice.

The children's home's strengths:

- Staff have, and are developing, good relationships with children. They are child focused in their approaches.
- Staff involve children in all aspects of their care.
- Staff members have a good working knowledge of safeguarding procedures and put them into practice.
- The staff team supports children to reflect on their behaviour and as a result children put themselves in fewer situations where they are at risk of harm.
- The manager and the staff act as good advocates for the children. The manager escalates issues to the placing authority where she feels it is not meeting its duty of care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2017	Full	Requires improvement

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
<p>The leadership and management standard</p> <p>The leadership and management standard requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13(2)(h))</p>	28/02/2018
<p>Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so—</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.</p> <p>In addition, staff must not use vague or emotive language to describe the behaviours of children.</p> <p>(Regulation 35(3)(a)(iii)(b)(ii))</p>	31/01/2018
<p>Children's case records</p> <p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry.</p> <p>(Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	31/01/2018
<p>Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—</p> <p>HMCI.</p> <p>(Regulation 44(7)(a))</p>	28/02/2018

In particular, this must be sent to HMCI in a timely manner.	
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Recommendations

- Regulation 40(4) requires the registered person to notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)–(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)) ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10).
In particular, leaders and manager need to ensure that these reports contain a clear description of events leading up to, during and after the event.
- Children should be in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full-time attendance at school unless the child's relevant plan indicates this is not in their best interests. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)

Inspection judgements

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

Children's educational progress and engagement is of variable quality. Not all children are fully engaging in their education. Individualised education timetables have been developed to increase children's participation. These are creative and interesting, and include children's interests. However, at the time of inspection only one child was receiving formal education outside of the home.

Staff treat children with dignity and respect. They seek and value children's opinions, views and ideas. Children say that they feel listened to. Staff support and encourage children to voice their views on all aspects of their care.

Children receive good-quality care from staff who have the children's best interests at the heart of their work. Staff have built good relationship with the children. For those children who are new to the home, this is still a work in progress.

The arrangements for young people moving into the home are well managed. Initial plans are developed from the documents provided by the placing authority.

Children take part in a good range of activities. These not only link to children's existing interests, but also encourage them to try new things. Children are becoming more physically active. This includes going to the gym, boxing and swimming. This has

improved children's health and well-being. One child has shown a particular talent for boxing, and is being supported to pursue this.

Staff support children in keeping in touch with and visiting their families and friends. Staff understand that this can be unsettling for children, so they make it as positive an experience as possible.

The relationship between the children and their key workers is important to the children. Each child has a key worker and a co-key worker. There is evidence that staff discuss a wide range of issues with children. Staff ensure that children talk through any incidents or restraints that they have been involved in. This includes helping the child to understand what happened, how they felt, the impact their behaviour had on others and what can be done to try and prevent such an incident from happening again.

Children's healthcare needs are met. Staff ensure that children have access to the medical care they need when they need it. Staff promote healthy lifestyles.

The children live in a comfortable, homely environment. Repairs are undertaken promptly and children are encouraged to get involved in how the house looks.

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

Staff only use restraint as a last resort. Currently, the quality of restraint records is inconsistent and needs to improve. Staff do not always record the duration of the restraint, or clearly identify which hold was used. This was raised as a requirement at the previous inspection and is still not met. In addition, staff use vague, emotive and institutionalised language to describe the children's behaviours prior to and during the restraint. For example, when a child was calm and a restraint hold was released a member of staff said the child had 'become compliant'.

There are good safeguarding procedures in place. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and protocols. Designated safeguarding leads and the staff team receive regular safeguarding training. Comprehensive records of all safeguarding incidents are maintained.

Since coming to live at the home, children have reduced their risk-taking behaviours. This work is ongoing, but progress is being made. Staff work with children to develop their understanding of why behaviours put them at risk of harm. This includes helping them to devise strategies that they can use themselves.

Each young person has an individualised risk assessment which is kept up to date. These contain clear strategies that enable staff to reduce levels of identified risk.

The staff are becoming more focused on restorative work with children, rather than using sanctions. This approach is becoming increasingly effective. Children also said that

they preferred this. Sanctions are still used on occasions, and have included input from the children as to what the sanction should be. There is an individualised behaviour plan for each child which contains clear strategies for staff to use. There is evidence of effective work being carried out with individual children and with the group as a whole, especially in relation to bullying.

There have been seven incidents of children going missing from the home since the last inspection. Staff respond well to these events, including following children. Children are welcomed back and staff use key-worker sessions to pinpoint the reason why the child went missing. Staff ensure that the children's placing authorities carry out return home interviews.

Each child could identify a number of staff who they would speak to if they were worried or upset.

The vetting and appointment of staff are carried out in line with safer recruitment practices. This protects young people from those who may wish to harm them.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been a change of manager. The manager has applied for registration with Ofsted. The manager has an understanding of the home's strengths and some of the home's areas for improvement. There is an action plan in place for improving the home and enhancing the children's experiences. Since the previous inspection, there have been some improvements. However, these are yet to be embedded in day-to-day practice. At the last inspection, eight requirements were made; six of these have been met and two have been repeated following this inspection. The three recommendations made following the last inspection have been met.

The monitoring carried out by the manager needs to improve, as it had not highlighted the shortfalls identified at this inspection. This was raised as a requirement at the previous inspection and has not been met. The manager does gather the views of children and external agencies, and uses this information to develop practice within the home.

Recording at the home requires improvement. Currently the quality of records maintained by staff is inconsistent. Staff do not always sign and date records. This prevents clear auditing of documents, and does not provide clear evidence of the progress made by children.

The manager ensures that all of the appropriate people are notified of significant events. The quality and level of detail in these reports vary. The manager needs to ensure that all reports clearly provide information on what led to the event, and what happened during and after the event. These reports need to tell the reader the story of the event, including actions taken to prevent a reoccurrence.

The home is regularly visited by an independent person. The reports of these visits cover all of the required areas, but they are not always received by HMIC in a timely manner.

Children are cared for by a considerate and child-focused staff team. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of staff changes, so the team is fairly new. The staff are keen and enthusiastic about the job, and want the best outcomes for the children.

Staff receive regular, good-quality supervision. As well as discussing the children, staff reflect on their work, including any incidents they have been involved in. This helps them to develop their skills. There are regular team meetings where staff review the strategies they are using and evaluate the effectiveness of these. They also discuss how to communicate more effectively, the influence of social media and many other topics. Staff training is of a good standard.

The staff have developed good working relationships with external professionals. Although none of these professionals were available to have input into this inspection, emails praising staff were seen during the inspection. Despite being new, the manager has challenged placing authorities where she has felt that they are not fulfilling their duty of care to the children. She identifies that advocating on behalf of the children is a key part of her role.

The home's statement of purpose is current and provides an accurate reflection of the service. The children's guide has recently been reviewed. It is in a child-friendly format, but the manager recognises that there is more work to do, including more involvement of the children in the final version.

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 differences 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: 1241840

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wessex College

Registered provider address: Ward Goodman, 4 Cedar Park, Cobham Road,
Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne BH21 7SF

Responsible individual: Selina Wall

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Wendy Anderson: social care inspector

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