

# SC038719

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict young people's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 16 young people aged between 10 and 17 years who are placed by local authorities under section 25 of the Children Act 1989.

Under section 25 of the Children Act 1989, admission of any young person who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

**Inspection date:** 14 February 2018

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Date of last inspection:** 25 April 2017

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## This inspection

### The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

Insufficient progress has been made in addressing the requirements raised at the previous inspection. Two recommendations have been assessed as suitably addressed and six education-related recommendations have not been considered. These will be assessed at the next full inspection.

Some aspects of monitoring activity have improved, in particular strategic oversight involving the manager, headteacher, responsible individual and senior managers from within the local authority. Following the last inspection, a number of processes have been introduced and have been effective in improving communication and accountability. This has been further strengthened by the introduction of a governance board, which meets quarterly to evaluate and scrutinise the home's performance. This is a relatively new concept and therefore it is difficult to assess the true impact of this board, but initial indicators are good; for example, reviewing the approach to how staff are recruited to this unique setting has resulted in all vacant positions being filled.

Some areas of day-to-day monitoring remain weak. The registered manager and team managers are failing to maintain good oversight of some aspects of staff practice in relation to the care and support for young people. This was evident during the inspection when inspectors came across areas of the home that were not clean and tidy. One young person's bedroom was particularly concerning, with the floor being strewn with dirty clothes and the toilet area having soiled tissue on the floor. There is little evidence to suggest that managers and staff are checking these areas regularly and supporting young people to take pride in their bedrooms. This does not make young people feel valued and does little to improve their self-worth.

It is acknowledged that managers have made an effort to improve the number of staff receiving regular supervision. However, it remains the case that some staff are still not provided with this essential support. Also, there is no system in place to ensure that education staff who work as 'casuals' in the residential units receive supervision from care managers. While they do get supervision from education managers, this is not directly linked to supporting young people in the residential setting.

There have been a number of serious incidents reported to Ofsted, all of which have been managed appropriately and in the best interests of young people. However, local authority procedures continue to result in unnecessary and sometimes significant delays between the incidents occurring and Ofsted being informed. This makes it difficult for Ofsted to fulfil its regulatory responsibilities, both in terms of evaluating practice and sharing information with the Department for Education.

The management of complaints has improved. Young people are now provided with a written response informing them of the outcome of their complaint. This ensures that they know that managers have followed up any concerns they have raised, giving young people more confidence in the complaints process.

Improved systems for administering medication and robust auditing have resulted in young people being safer. There have been no medication errors since the last inspection, and records were found to be complete and provide an accurate reflection of the young people's medication regimes.

An up-to-date version of the home's statement of purpose is now available on the home's website. This document provides good information about the aims and objectives of the home and the services and support available to young people. Senior managers

are in the process of considering the functionality of this website and how it can be improved, if viable to do so.

Behaviour management approaches, including physical restraint, single separation and managing way, are used proportionally when responding to challenging and confrontational behaviour. Records pertaining to the use of behaviour management methods have improved. Those reviewed were completed within legislative timeframes and, in the main, are of good quality. Managers continue to review each incident using closed circuit television, and they complete a detailed analysis report. The scope of this review has been widened to include the build-up, and the actions taken by staff post-incident. This information is being used to improve staff practice, and in some cases to support emerging investigations.

Managers have continued to be proactive in their efforts to maintain and improve security. Mobility (planned and approved visits into the community) continues to be used to facilitate recreational opportunities, appointments and resettlement visits. This is risk assessed and well planned, with measures being in place should young people abscond. Positively, there have been no incidents of absconding since the last inspection. Protocols between the police and the home are in place in the event of a young person absconding. Expectations of placing authorities to provide individual return interviews following these types of incidents are now made clear at the point of admission. The introduction of video conferencing suites means that young people assessed as high risk if they leave the home can be supported to make representations at meetings and court without leaving the home.

Managers continue to give young people's safety and security the utmost priority, and these are integral to all parts of decision making. This was evident at the last inspection when managers took the decision to limit occupancy in recognition of the number of vacancies in the staff team. It has proven difficult to recruit staff to this highly complex and challenging job, and occupancy during this period has not exceeded 56%, as a result of not having enough permanent staff.

At the time of the inspection there were still a number of staff vacancies, and occupancy had been reduced further. The atmosphere in the home was noticeably flat, possibly indicating the low morale among some staff members. Without doubt, the last few months have been a challenge for permanent staff who have, at times, had to rely on the support of agency workers to ensure that safe ratios are maintained. On one occasion, the number of agency workers exceeded the number of permanent staff on duty in the unit. It is clear that a large majority of agency workers are highly effective in their role and provide good care for young people. Conversely, some do not have the skills, experience or attributes to work in this environment; for example, one worker had no previous experience of working with young people, held no relevant qualifications and had not undertaken any form of relevant training. The information provided by the agency prior to this member of staff starting work was not rigorously assessed by the duty manager.

Positively, a successful recruitment drive has occurred which means that when the most

recently appointed staff come on line, the home will have a full complement. There has been a great deal of effort put into improving the recruitment and induction process, and managers have learned from their experiences. For example, prior to appointment, staff are brought into the centre to allow them to understand what it means to work in a secure setting. Also, interviews focus more on attributes such as resilience, personality and motivation. The local authority has, once more, agreed to limit admissions and increase numbers only when staff are on board, fully operational and competent.

The young people at this home have a range of complex needs that are assessed at the point of admission. Comprehensive and professionally informed programmes of support are developed to address each young person's needs, behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities. Young people have good access to a range of health professionals, teachers and specialist workers. There is good evidence that the collective efforts of this multi-disciplinary team help to keep young people safe, and for the majority promote progress in preparation for their release; for example, young people's self-regulation and emotional control improve over time and result in a reduction in behaviours such as self-harm.

Young people offered mixed views to inspectors during the inspection regarding their care. Most could identify staff who they can go to for support and could offer examples of how they have been helped. One young person said, 'The staff are really nice. I can talk to most of them about anything. I like the manager; she is good. She is down with the kids. By that I mean she 'gets' us.'

However, there were as many negative comments, including young people complaining about the food, the lack of cleanliness, staff apathy and constantly being cold. This was, in part, driven by young people being fed up with the heating not working, an issue that has gone on for a number of months. Indeed, at the time of the inspection young people were limited to a small number of areas, which were being kept warm through the use of portable heaters. Worryingly, the use of these heaters had not been risk assessed. This is a specific concern in relation to one young person who engages in self-harm using ligatures and has, on at least one occasion, been allowed to have a flexed heater in her bedroom without staff supervision. Although staff were well motivated in their decision making, this undermines other precautionary measures such as anti-rip bedding.

A comprehensive review of this service is being undertaken currently by the local authority. This is in recognition of the need to provide a long-term solution to the challenges this home has faced over a number of years. The registered manager has submitted a detailed business plan following her consultation with senior managers and visits to other secure units. She and the local authority are committed to making the necessary improvements.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/04/2017	Full	Requires improvement to

		be good
08/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/05/2016	Full	Good
20/10/2015	Full	Good

## 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b) and (2)(c)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, repair the heating system and ensure that all areas of the home are suitably warm when used by young people. Also, staff should ensure that high standards of cleanliness are consistently maintained throughout the home and should encourage and support young people to take pride in their home, in particular their bedrooms.</p>	31/03/2018
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>That the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as</p>	31/03/2018

<p>to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12(2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the home's risk assessments include how staff should manage the potential risk when using portable heaters, including the individual risks posed to specific young people.</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) 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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b) and (2)(h))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to managers ensuring that they maintain oversight of day-to-day practice to make sure staff are maintaining high standards of care for young people.</p>	31/03/2018
<p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b) and (2)(c))</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring that prior to the use of agency staff, their experience, skills and employment history have been rigorously assessed to ensure they are suitable to meet the needs of this complex, challenging and vulnerable group of children.</p>	31/03/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))</p>	31/03/2018
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; or there is any other incident relating to</p>	31/03/2018

a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(b)(e))	
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## Recommendations

- No more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night at the home, should be from an external agency. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.17)

## 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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:** SC038719

**Provision sub-type:** Secure unit

**Registered provider:** Hampshire County Council

**Registered provider address:** The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UG

**Responsible individual:** Martin Smith

**Registered manager:** Sophia Mathias

## **Inspector(s)**

Paul Scott, social care inspector  
Elaine Allison, social care inspector



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