

1255823

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children. The manager has been registered since June 2017.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 14 to 15 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/11/2017	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
In particular, ensure that records of restraint are clearly identifiable from other incidents.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children strongly benefit from receiving highly individualised care directly from skilled staff. This excellent care is often helpfully informed by specialists, commissioned by the home's managers. These high levels of nurturing attention enable children to make big, positive changes in their lives.

As a staff member said, 'We put in the groundwork to build really strong relationships with the children.' In practice, this means that staff know how children like their daily routines to be and that they make extensive efforts to accommodate these, for example delivering bespoke breakfasts and supporting specific bedtime rituals. This exceptionally personalised care means that children build trust and feel secure.

Staff and managers also focus on rebuilding sometimes fractured relationships with birth families. Local authority colleagues are very positive about the staff's outstanding success in restoring family contact. One social worker said, 'Since [the child] has been in the home, contact has moved from supervised to her staying [on family visits] unsupervised.'

Children are all in full-time education and most have excellent attendance and achievement records, even though this was not at all the position when they joined the home. Staff are exceptionally tenacious in encouraging children to move from no school attendance to daily attendance. For most children in the home daily attendance in education is the new norm, and they are now happily settled into this rewarding routine.

Great value is placed on hearing and responding to children's views. For example, each child has a self-designed, and very different, bedroom. Highly effective communication ensures that all staff promptly know of changes, for instance that a child now prefers a different hot drink to the one she previously liked. There is an exceptionally strong and positive emphasis on staff encouraging children to bring friends into the home and, consequently, there is often a mix of children in the house, helping it to feel even more

homely.

Staff prioritise spending time with children, such as going out crabbing with them or baking cakes in the house. They work hard at sending children to school in a positive frame of mind, welcome them on return and listen to their tales about their day. Managers and staff prioritise celebrating birthdays, and key staff come in even if they are not on shift. Children can plan their own party and invite as many friends and family members as they wish.

This sensitive and responsive care helps children to form and sustain appropriate attachments. It encourages these children to grow in confidence and helps them develop a positive self-view. It gives some children the strength to fundamentally change their identity, and they are happier and healthier as a result.

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

This home has demonstrated consistently excellent practice in successfully reducing the risks that children were taking. For example, children are no longer seen by social workers as being at risk of child sexual exploitation, and children's levels and frequency of self-harm have either diminished completely or been significantly reduced.

Staff have also been highly effective at protecting children from other dangers, such as internet-based risks. As well as effective practical and relationship measures taken by staff, all children have completed an AQA (UK) qualification in internet safety. This not only helps keep children safe, but also builds up their skills and confidence in themselves.

When they joined the home, some children had worrying patterns of routinely going missing from care. This is no longer the case, and there have been no instances of children going missing for more than an hour since the last full inspection. This demonstrates an exceptionally effective risk reduction strategy and means that these children are at considerably less risk of harm.

All children have individualised behavioural incentives, as well as whole home behavioural expectations that apply to staff and children alike. This creates a positive behavioural climate that is well rewarded by individualised treats. Low rates of physical restraint and sanctions demonstrate that this is a highly effective behavioural system, although recording of physical restraint could be clearer.

Staff strive to be proactive about potentially negative behaviour, for example by showing a child who is fascinated by fire the impact of a blaze on woods and wildlife nearby. If negative behaviour does occur, staff use the principle of 'making amends' to help the child to put it right. As a group, staff will then consider what the behaviour is trying to communicate, and then try to meet that need. For example, a child was successfully given more control and status by being made a home health and safety monitor.

Although there have been no child protection concerns or investigations into suspicions of harm, staff are well trained and aware of how to respond to concerns about children's safety.

Children benefit from living in a home that is exceptionally well maintained and is spacious and comfortable. The home has an excellent standard of safety measures built in, for example it has a sprinkler system in case of fire. The wider organisation further ensures children's safety by their rigorous recruitment practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There is a highly effective registered manager in post, who is ably supported by a very experienced deputy manager. The registered manager has the highest expectations for the children in the home, and this sets an aspirational culture in which the staff, too, are ambitious for excellence. The children have all risen to these expectations, and their progress from their starting points is exceptional.

This home opened in 2017 and is, therefore, a relatively new home, with a carefully recruited staff team. Most members of the team have not worked in children's homes before and have diverse backgrounds, although many have qualifications in psychology. This mix brings a degree of freshness and creativity to everyday issues, which has proved very successful in achieving great outcomes for children.

The members of the management team stagger their working hours so that at least one of them is there for the children before and after school hours. They know their children very well, and when concerned about their progress have successfully advocated for them, including to obtain a change of school placement. The management team members have excellent relationships with other agencies, and social workers have great confidence both in their communication and their care.

Staff feel very well supported, both by their regular, formal supervision and by their supportive relationships within the wider team. As well as formal training sessions, managers are able to react quickly to changing needs, for example to arrange bespoke team-based sessions on such areas as gender identity. This flexibility is possible because of the strong links that managers have built with external agencies such as the child and adolescent mental health services.

The management team has excellent monitoring systems in place which ensure consistent and clear recording, and prompt and effective communications with important others, for example social workers. Managers have been successful in completing the tasks from the last inspection and they are eager to continuously improve their practice so that children continue to progress. To this end, there is a closely monitored and reviewed development plan in place.

Notifications to Ofsted are appropriate and timely. The statement of purpose is regularly updated and accurately sets out the ethos and purpose of the home. The registered

provider is financially viable and has very strongly demonstrated that it is able to deliver an excellent quality of stable care to children.

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: 1255823

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Susan Lomax

Registered manager: Kerry Pringle

Inspectors

Bridget Goddard, social care inspector

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