

SC032163

Registered provider: Dorset County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority. The home is registered to accommodate up to nine children who have complex learning difficulties and disabilities.

The home provides long-term placements for children in accommodation that comprises four distinct living areas located in the main building. The occupancy levels of each living area are determined by the needs and the mix of the children.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2007.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 August 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/11/2017	Full	Good
06/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

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>13: The leadership and management standard</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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(h))</p> <p>In particular, maintain a record of the training and qualifications of adult care workers who are working at the home, to ensure that they have the skills to provide the required care to children who are moving to adult services. In addition, analyse, collate and use the feedback gathered from parents or other people who have a significant relationship to the child, to further develop the care and services provided.</p>	31/10/19
<p>44: Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded.</p>	30/11/19

(Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a)(4)(a))

In particular, the regulation 44 visitor must routinely contact parents and social works for their feedback. In addition, the report must include a clear statement regarding the regulation 44 visitor's view about whether children are effectively safeguarded.

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9) In particular, review the amount of health and safety signage around the home.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5) In particular, improve the quality and scope to the locality assessment.
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4) In particular, extend the scope of the impact risk assessment to contain information on potential risks the existing group of children may present to a new child.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress, especially in their personal development, education and their involvement in the community. Staff are proud of children's achievements and the progress they make. Staff celebrate children's positive behaviours and when they try new activities. This approach leads to children having good day-to-day life experiences.

Staff support children to take part in a wide variety of activities. These are fun, purposeful and sometimes challenging; helping children to develop their self-esteem. Parents said how impressed they were with the range of activities and events. One

parent was pleased about being able to go out with her child, supported by staff, to a cafe. This parent said she did not think this was something she would ever be able to do. Another parent said their child had not had the same opportunities in previous homes.

Children receive good-quality care from dedicated staff with whom they have built strong, positive relationships. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and how these needs are to be met. This understanding is supported by clear, detailed plans that reflect the children's current needs. These plans are reviewed regularly and document the progress children are making.

Children's moves into and from the home are managed sensitively to reduce the anxiety levels for the children and their families. One parent said how impressed they were with the speed at which the staff made adaptations to their child's room, including installing a wet room for him. Leaders and managers carry out risk assessments on each potential new child to look at the impact they may have on the existing group of children. Although there is some information of the risks the existing group of children may pose to a new child, this needs to be expanded.

As appropriate, staff prepare children for the next stage of their lives, including when children are moving into adult services. Staff work closely with the adult services teams to ensure that important information is shared about the needs of the child. At times, staff from the new home work in this home. Appropriate safeguarding checks are in place, but currently leaders and managers do not maintain a record of the training these staff have undertaken to ensure that their skills meet the needs of the child.

Children live in a spacious and comfortable home. Work has been carried out to improve the quality and homeliness. This work is ongoing, in response to the changing needs and tastes of the children. There are many health and safety and fire signs, which detract from the otherwise homely environment the staff have created.

All children are in full-time education and doing well. Staff are currently providing additional support for one child at school, to maintain his placement.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are good because staff have a good understanding of the additional vulnerabilities of the children they care for. Records of safeguarding events are comprehensive. Leaders and managers analyse all safeguarding events and use lessons learned from these events to improve staff practice.

Behaviour is well managed, resulting in a reduction in the number of incidents and restraints. Detailed behaviour management plans provide staff with clear, effective guidance about how to support children. Staff enable children to develop their understanding of their behaviours and self-soothing strategies. Records of incidents and restraints have improved. They now provide a clear record of events. Incidents are monitored effectively by leaders and managers. They review staff practice, identify any

patterns and ensure that the good-quality records are maintained.

Staff have a good understanding of risk and how this needs to be managed; positively, they are not risk averse. Risk assessments are of a good quality and provide control measures to reduce the level of risk. This approach enables children to take part in exciting and challenging activities safely. The locality assessment is appropriate, but the level of detail it contains could be improved.

Staff carry out regular fire drills with children, some of which are silent drills as the noise of the alarm makes some children anxious. Each child has a personal evacuation plan, detailing what support they need. Leaders and managers ensure that children who need additional support or fire safety equipment have this. Records of fire drills now contain the names of all those taking part.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Management arrangements are good. Monitoring is effective and ensures that the providers understand the quality of care provided in the home. Leaders and managers analyse practice, identify areas for improvement and act to address these. This has led to standards being raised which, in turn, leads to better outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers provide staff with good-quality support, both formally and informally, which helps them develop their skills and improve their practice. Records of supervision sessions are now of a good quality and show that staff reflect on their work and identify how they are helping children to make progress.

Staff have good relationships with families and external professionals. They work collaboratively towards the best outcome for the child. Parents and external professionals spoken with praised the staff for their commitment to the children, their communication skills and their hospitality.

Leaders and managers consult with children, their families and external professionals regularly. They consider the views expressed and, where possible, take action. However, leaders and managers do not collate this information effectively to provide clear evidence of the impact of consultation.

An independent visitor carries out monthly visits, and reports of these visits also require improvement. Consultation with parents and social workers is not routinely carried out or reported on. In addition, the independent visitor does not consistently state if, in their opinion, the children are safe.

The quality of records maintained by staff has improved. Records are well organised, information is current and provides staff with clear guidance.

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: SC032163

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

Responsible individual: Paula Bates

Registered manager: James Collins

Inspector

Wendy Anderson, social care inspector

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