

1257065

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who have social and emotional difficulties.

There is a manager in post who is not yet registered.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 January 2020

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 20/03/2019 | Full | Outstanding |
| 21/12/2017 | 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>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 staff take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(2)(a)(vi))</p> | 01/06/2020 |
| <p>The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (2)(a) and (3)(d))</p> | 01/06/2020 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 34 (4)(b)(c))</p> | 01/06/2020 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that 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 name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of</p> | 01/06/2020 |

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| <p>the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result 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 ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii) and (b)(i)(ii)(c))</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. (Regulation 44 (2)(a))</p> | <p>01/06/2020</p> |

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)
- The children's guide should help children to understand:
 - what the day to day routines of the home are ('what happens in the home');
 - the Statement of Purpose of the home (the care they can expect to receive while living there);
 - how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure;
 - how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible; and
 - how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner.
 ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the

home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the Quality Standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff members provide good-quality, individualised support to children. This assists children to make good progress across all aspects of their lives. Shortfalls identified during this inspection do not adversely impact on the overall experiences of children.

The help children receive to progress their learning and personal development is a strength of the home. The staff team uses creative ideas to assist children when they move to new educational settings. This lessens anxiety and children settle quickly into their new learning environments. Good communication systems exist between the children's home, and schools and colleges. This ensures that all adults involved are aware of children's educational goals and achievements. Children have access to a wide range of resources which provide further opportunities to expand their knowledge and talents when at home.

Children are involved in the creation and review of their in-house care plans. These plans are comprehensive. They celebrate each child's individuality and diverse needs. They provide clear direction for all staff members on how children are progressing and detail what areas the child may need additional help with. A child stated, 'Staff help me because they go through things with me step by step, and it helps me understand what I

need to do to go forward.'

As a result of good in-house planning, children's social, emotional and physical health needs are fully met. Children spend time with family members, which helps maintain attachments to those important to them.

Regular direct work helps build positive relationships between the children and staff. Children are well supported to learn life skills. One child has successfully applied for, been interviewed for and obtained a part-time job. This process has helped the child build confidence and gain valuable work experience as they move towards adulthood. Feedback from parents shows that children develop useful age-appropriate independence skills such as doing their laundry and cooking.

The needs of the children already resident are fully considered and evaluated before any further admission to the home. This, alongside planned visited and overnight stays, supports successful moves. One child said, 'When I moved in, the staff made me feel really special and welcomed.'

Photographs around their home capture the wide range of activities and life experiences children take part in. Some children have tried new interests such as bowling and fishing. Children live in an environment that is colourful, bright and homely. Their bedrooms reflect their personalities and individual interests. Some children have their own small animals to care for and feed. Children frequently assist in preparing the evening meal for everyone. Children and staff eat together and share stories about their day, with laughter, listening with interest to each other.

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

Overall, safeguarding practice within the home is good. The manager and senior staff attend relevant multi-agency meetings and fully contribute to plans around children which make the children safer. There has been one failure to follow the organisation's safeguarding policy in relation to an allegation made by a child. The manager and responsible individual took immediate action to review their internal monitoring processes to learn from this specific shortfall.

Children identify adults to whom they would speak if they were worried. When children have spoken about concerns about bullying at school, staff have highlighted this quickly to the relevant educational establishment, and provided support and reassurance to the child.

Children know how to complain. The manager considers all complaints seriously. Children receive a written response detailing all the actions taken. External complaints are also effectively dealt with and used to reflect on and improve practice. There is a 'wishes and feelings' board which promotes feedback and comments from both children and staff. The board captures praise, kind comments about others, and how children are generally feeling. The board is reviewed regularly by staff to note any actions needed.

Children who have lived in the setting for some years have risk assessments which contain historical information about past behaviours and risks which are no longer relevant. This out-of-date information makes it difficult to identify what the current risks are for these children and what measures staff need to take to reduce them.

Two children who were previously placed at the children's home went missing on multiple occasions. Responses by the staff team to ensure their safety were timely and appropriate. These children did not receive independent return home interviews. Consequently, there were missed opportunities to gather intelligence and inform the children's home risk assessments for these children.

The use of restraint in the home is low, with the last recorded restraint in September 2019. The restraint records do not adhere to the regulatory requirements. This makes it harder for the manager to ensure that any use of restraint is fair and to check that appropriate debriefs have taken place with the children and staff members involved. Children engage well with a praise point system which operates. This system encourages positive behaviour and links with individual children's goals and plans.

Recruitment practice is compromised by gaps of six and eight months in one staff member's employment history. These gaps had not been identified and followed up within the recruitment process or through internal monitoring processes.

Staff members have identified that two large cupboards which house the boiler and electrical wiring lack sufficient ventilation. This was reported via the maintenance system some months ago. Staff are managing this potential risk in the interim via venting the cupboards when the home is quiet, but this is not a long-term solution. The property has fire doors throughout. Staff use props to keep these open. This allows staff to observe where children and staff are, and allows a free flow of movement across the home. However, this compromises the effectiveness of the fire doors in an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left the post in October 2019. There has been a new manager in post since January 2020, who has applied to register with Ofsted.

The whole staff team works effectively with external professionals involved in the lives of the children. Staff members provide comprehensive reports and contribute effectively to meetings and reviews. Good communication systems exist to keep all relevant parties updated with children's achievements and any significant incidents. One professional commented, 'The home is a warm and nurturing place. The staff go above and beyond for the children in their care.' Quarterly reports clearly capture how children make and sustain progress across their lives.

The majority of the staff team members have extensive experience of working in children's residential care, including within this home. New staff members receive a good induction. This includes guidance on what the ethos of the service is, and direction about safe practice and relevant procedures. All staff are provided with relevant training to

meet the needs of children placed with the home, and this is refreshed appropriately.

Staff members spoken with stated that they feel well supported by the senior management team and that they receive regular supervision. However, records of supervision sessions do not reflect this frequency. The lack of records makes it difficult to evaluate the frequency, quality and effectiveness of the supervision staff receive. Staff do not receive an annual appraisal of their performance. Consequently, their fitness to carry out their job role is not formally assessed and monitored to ensure that good standards of care are maintained. Goal plans have recently been implemented for some staff, but it is not clear how these documents fit within a formal appraisal system.

The internal monitoring report completed by the previous registered manager, and which covered a six-month period, only identified positive aspects of the work and leadership of the home. It did not identify any areas for development, and had no action plan to improve practice. The report is not being used as a tool for continuous improvement.

Visits from the independent person take place on a monthly basis. The rigour of these is not always apparent. The visitor does not routinely gather feedback from parents or the wider family about the care of their child or family member. This is a missed opportunity to obtain relevant feedback on the effectiveness of the children's home.

There are currently two children's guides to the home. Both are slightly different. However, neither contain the information that is listed within the guide to the quality standards, for example how to access independent advocacy. As a result, children are not given full and relevant information when they move in and which they can keep and refer to while they live at the home.

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: 1257065

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Hampshire Council, 3rd Floor, Elizabeth II Court North, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG

Responsible individual: John Stacey

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Anna Williams, social care inspector

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