

Swanwick Lodge

Hampshire County Council
Glen Road, Swanwick, Southampton, Hampshire SO31 7HD

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children's liberty.

The home can accommodate up to 10 children who are aged between 10 and 17 years. At the time of the inspection, eight children were living in the home.

The home cares for children placed by local authorities under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 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.

The manager of the home registered with Ofsted in March 2022.

Inspection dates: 30 April to 2 May 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
Children's education and learning	good
Children's health	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The secure 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: 25 April 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/04/2023	Full	Good
05/04/2022	Full	Good
22/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children experience an extremely nurturing approach from staff who provide highly consistent care. Staff have excellent relationships with the children, and because of this, children feel safe and very well cared for. Staff's dedication and resilience demonstrates to the children that the adults around them care and do not give up when they need them the most. As a result, staff are able to build very positive relationships with the children in a short space of time.

Staff use one-to-one sessions to encourage children to communicate their views, wishes and feelings. These sessions are highly creative and child-focused. Any incidents or concerns are routinely followed up in discussions between children and staff. These sessions are carefully planned to support children to reflect on their thoughts or worries, without leaving them feeling that they are to blame. This helps children to develop self-awareness and life skills.

Children live in a homely and welcoming environment. Children have a say in how the home is decorated and personalise their own bedrooms, which helps them to have a sense of belonging. One child said that it is a 'lovely place to live'.

The use of mobility (opportunities for children to spend time in the community prior to moving on from the home) is a particular strength. Plans are individualised to each child's needs and interests and are carried out at the child's pace. Staff have an in-depth understanding of the importance of children having mobility to help them develop important social skills and confidence.

Children's plans are of an excellent quality. They are child-centred, and the child's voice is heard throughout. As a result, this supports staff in delivering consistent high-quality care to children.

Children know how to make complaints. This allows children to freely express their views and concerns about the quality of care that they receive. Staff respond quickly and appropriately to any complaints and children receive a well-thought-through, caring response.

Children are supported well by staff to take part in a variety of activities, such as horse riding, football and trips to the cinema. Furthermore, children are supported by staff to raise money for charities of their choice. This raises children's awareness of the purpose of charities and promotes a culture of kindness and empathy.

Staff help and support children when children are preparing to leave the home. Children's transition plans are well thought out, and the length of the visits outside of the home is based on the individual child's needs. This child-centred approach means that

children are getting to know the people who will be providing their future care. This supports children effectively to return to the community successfully.

Children's social workers provided very positive feedback, saying that children's needs are well met, and that children are making excellent progress from their starting points and becoming more resilient. They said children are kept safe, that staff know the children's complex needs very well and that staff's approach to the children is very caring and nurturing. They said that there are lots of activities for the children to do that the children enjoy.

Children's education and learning: good

Children have positive relationships with education staff and most children increase their resilience over time, in some very difficult circumstances. Most children have good attendance and a positive approach to education. Where children do not want to go to the classroom, education and care staff work well together to provide education elsewhere in the home.

In the absence of the education manager, the head of service and two senior tutors have provided strong leadership. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in education. There are strong education partnership arrangements in place, through the local authority, which provides an effective oversight of the quality of the curriculum.

Leaders have remedied the shortfalls in relation to reading identified at the previous inspection. They have developed and implemented a reading strategy based on the use of phonics. Staff assess children's reading ability accurately on arrival. They teach children how to read using phonics. Leaders provide training for all teachers and care staff on how to support children's reading. Leaders have purchased a wide range of appropriate books for use in and out of the classroom. This is already improving how well children can read.

Children have access to a core curriculum of English, mathematics and science. Leaders and managers offer a broad curriculum which meets children's needs. Leaders use external staff well to extend the curriculum. For example, they provide lessons in sport, outdoor education, music and art. Managers use learning coaches to offer vocational options which include hair and beauty, and hospitality. Leaders are rightly planning to introduce an additional vocational option in design and technology to meet the needs of children.

Leaders and managers collect an appropriate range of information about children's starting points. Teachers assess children's initial understanding in mathematics, English and reading. They use the information from the education, care and health plan and psychological assessments to identify children's additional learning needs. Most teachers use this information well to plan individual curriculums which prepare children for their next steps.

Teachers have suitable qualifications and professional experience for their roles. Leaders provide appropriate professional development and access to professional qualifications. This improves the quality of teaching over time.

Children respond well to the activities that teachers plan. In nearly all subjects, teachers teach the curriculum well. They use a variety of relevant, interesting and appropriately challenging resources and activities. Through skilful teaching they learn more and remember more about new topics. Teachers provide regular and clear feedback to children on their progress, and this helps them to improve.

For example, in mathematics teachers ensure, through skilful demonstration and explanation, that children understand how to multiply two-digit numbers. Children practise and reinforce their understanding, before moving on to multiplication of three-digit numbers. In music, the teacher demonstrates how to play a major chord, and then provides opportunities for the child to repeat this chord on their guitar with an appropriate backing track.

Children gain appropriate external accreditation for at least part of their programme. This improves their self-esteem.

Too few children make good progress in science. Teachers do not adapt the content of the course, nor their teaching methods to meet the needs of the children. For example, in some cases the language used in the learning resources is too difficult for the child to understand.

Teachers and learning coaches work well together to manage the behaviour of the children. They are sensitive to the children's backgrounds, their emotional state and group dynamics. Teachers use the systems of reward and consequence appropriately. There is a purposeful atmosphere during lessons. Teachers and assistants do not always plan the academic learning support in sufficient detail. As a result, support is not as effective as it could be.

Children's understanding of healthy relationships, and important skills for life, such as budgeting, have improved because education managers have worked closely with the health team to develop a jointly delivered personal development curriculum. Through weekly assemblies, teachers develop a sense of community in the home. Regular celebrations of a wide range of cultural events improve children's understanding of diversity. Children benefit from high-quality independent careers education, information, advice and guidance, preparing children well for their next steps.

Children's health: outstanding

Children experience a collaborative and holistic approach to their care, through integrated working between the healthcare team, education and the home. This is a real strength.

Holistic health assessments are routinely completed to ensure the early identification of children's physical and mental healthcare needs. The process for those children who arrive when healthcare staff are not present has been strengthened, helping to make sure that timely information is captured. Corresponding care plans are developed, and these are reviewed regularly. As a result, any new and emerging needs are recognised and met.

The healthcare team is focused on improving health outcomes for each child and children make excellent progress from their starting points. A monthly update is provided to each child's social workers showing the progress made. Staff were creative in their approach and interventions were individualised to meet the needs of each child.

Children have access to an appropriate range of health services. However, there continues to be an absence of a visiting GP to the home which has been an ongoing issue for several years; this has been correctly escalated by the health team and registered manager, who continue to challenge this in an appropriate way in the best interests of children. Children are able to attend the local practice for appointments. Health promotion is delivered as part of the weekly education timetable, and this helps to improve children's knowledge around their health and make healthy lifestyle choices. Processes are in place for children to receive the appropriate care and support following any incidents, including a robust pathway with the local children's emergency department to be able to gain advice.

Children have detailed psychologically based formulation plans to help staff understand each child and underpin their trauma-informed approach to working with them. They are used as part of any debrief to help ensure that staff are using the strategies but also to consider alternatives if these are not working. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that all staff are skilled and supported to carry out their work to help achieve the best outcomes for children. This includes all staff having trauma-informed training and reflective practice. Care staff report that they are well supported by the healthcare team, with a focus on their well-being needs. The healthcare service is exceptionally well-embedded across the whole home.

Healthcare staff are up to date with their mandatory training and have access to additional bespoke training to aid their development. Clinical supervision is carried out in line with the trust's policy and staff feel exceptionally well supported.

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

Children's safety is promoted to a high standard. Staff really do get to know the children in their care. They understand their vulnerabilities and how their past trauma impacts on their behaviour and ability to cope with stressful situations. Consequently, carefully thought through plans are devised and conscientiously followed to ensure that children are kept as safe as possible.

Children's emotional and psychological well-being is protected and nurtured to a very high standard. Staff awareness of trauma and angst is profound, and this knowledge underpins their approach to the care, safety and well-being of children.

Children's safety is seen as paramount. Managers are well versed in their duties and obligations if there are any concerns about a child's safety and well-being. Protocols are implemented swiftly and effectively in order to ensure that children are safe. Feedback from professionals is very positive about the transparency and thoroughness in addressing issues and sharing information.

There is a strong emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour. The trust children develop with staff helps them to explore different strategies on how they can cope with their feelings and frustrations. This helps them to reflect on their past experiences and to learn new strategies to help them to improve their life chances and life skills. Staff are positive role models and show kindness and insight when children are anxious and distressed. This promotes the supportive and nurturing relationships observed by inspectors.

All members of staff are acutely aware of each child's vulnerability should they go missing from the home. There are clear protocols in place for them to follow. While no child has gone missing, there have been occasions when staff have had to offer close support to children while away from the home in the community. This has been effective and helped them to return safely.

The use of single separation (where children are locked into an area alone) and being managed away (where children are locked into an area but always with staff present) are closely scrutinised by managers. Practice is mainly seen to be appropriate and within regulations. On two occasions, management scrutiny identified shortfalls which were acted upon in a timely and reflective manner. Practice was explored and training updated. As a result, training was extended to the wider staff team to ensure that its members are clear about the legal criteria for the use of these measures of control. Since this training three months ago there has been no use of single separation.

Incidents where physical restraint has been used are scrutinised closely to ensure that the use was appropriate and proportionate. Staff reflect on their practice to see if there are any learning points. Importantly, support plans which identify how each child prefers to be reassured and guided are written in a child-friendly style and truly reflect their voice and opinion. Consequently, staff provide children with sensitive support that is in line with their preferences.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The highly regarded manager leads by example and is inspirational and ambitious in her approach. She sets a culture of high aspiration for children and the home that staff work enthusiastically to achieve.

Children benefit from being supported by a fully staffed, reliable and well-established team whose members know them extremely well. Motivated and dynamic staff love working at the home. Staff spoke with real passion and devotion about caring for children and ensuring that each child is kept safe and experiences positive outcomes. Staff have regular access to a highly skilled therapeutic team to support their

development, and benefit from a robust reflective practice process, to support their development and enhance their well-being. Training is of a high standard and tailored to meet the complex individual needs of the children.

Leaders and managers have continued to improve the home over a sustained period. Furthermore, they have developed and improved wider service provision that delivers very high quality care for children who have very positive experiences.

There is strong collaborative working between the home and partner agencies. The manager confidently challenges services when appropriate to ensure that the best possible outcomes for children are achieved.

The integrated management team is committed to continuous development and improvement. There is an embedded whole-home ethos to work with the children in a nurturing, therapeutic way. This includes the business team and the facilities team, as well as care, health and education staff. Positive relationships and effective interventions support children's progress and help protect them from harm.

Leaders and managers know their strengths and weaknesses and use learning from significant events to inform staff practice and improve children's lives. The child's voice is always heard, and professionals' advice is sought to ensure that children benefit from meaningful high-quality care.

The management team has highly effective systems in place to monitor and review the quality of care for children in the home. The team knows the areas for further development and identifies and responds to emerging trends or behaviours in a timely and effective way.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is planned and taught in a way that meets the needs of the children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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'.

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC038719

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider: Hampshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Kieran Lyons

Registered manager: Sarah Herbert

Inspectors

Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

Paul Taylor, OI

Martin Ward, HMI, FES

Cat Raycraft, Care Quality Commission (CQC)

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