

2624723

Registered provider:

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 for one child aged between seven and 17 years. According to the home's statement of purpose, it offers residential care for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Staff provide child-centred care and support which have a positive impact on the young person's life. However, shortfalls in recognising and responding to some safeguarding risks have undermined the overall quality and experience of care for the young person.

Staff ensure that the young person has a strong voice and that her wishes and feelings, about matters affecting her, are considered and listened to. However, some less experienced staff have let the young person's voice take precedence over their responsibility to provide appropriate support and challenge. As a result, the young person has received mixed messages, for example about when staff may enter her bedroom.

The staff encourage and nurture the young person's aspirations for her future. Staff ensure good routines are in place to support the young person's college attendance. Staff work closely with her tutor to ensure effective communication. Consequently, problems are addressed, college attendance is improving, and the young person is making academic progress.

The staff show a strong interest in the young person's daily experiences and well-being. Staff help the young person develop independent living skills. For example, encouraging her to take the bus to college and encouraging her talent in baking. This helps her learn responsibility and self-reliance.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The boundaries that the staff have set for the young person have not always been appropriate or consistently followed. The staff and the previous manager did not ensure that, as a team, they managed unsafe behaviours well on all occasions. Staff said that they are now working together more effectively. They acknowledged that they must continue to develop their approach to teamwork, to increase consistency.

The home has an internal wireless broadband set up with an appropriate level of filtering. However, the staff were unaware whether a phone contract, set up by a parent for the young person, has the appropriate blocks on to prevent unsuitable content. Further, there is no risk assessment relating to the young person's social media use. This means that the young person's internet access is not managed by the staff in a way that ensures a reasonable duty of care in providing age-appropriate safeguarding when she is online.

There are clear plans in place for the staff to follow if a young person goes missing. However, on one occasion, the staff did not protect the young person when she left

the home during the night. Staff did not physically follow the young person or use professional curiosity to find out where she was going or who she was with. Consequently, she was not kept safe.

Managers did not notify Ofsted about a child protection incident as required. The young person was not put at risk by this, as the other appropriate agencies were notified promptly.

An agreed action, identified after a previous safeguarding incident, included installing an outside closed-circuit television (CCTV) system. This has not been put in place. As a result, the identified risks have not been reduced for the young person. A video doorbell has been ordered to mitigate the risk but there has been no sense of urgency by the managers to ensure a timely completion.

Staff undertake formal and informal direct work with the young person whenever opportunities arise, for example during car journeys, to explore and address high-risk behaviours. This sends the young person a message that the staff care and worry about her.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the home's recent registration with Ofsted, the registered manager has left her post. This, alongside other staffing changes, has led to a period of instability at the home. The visible and hands-on approach, provided by the responsible individual and other managers, have helped to lessen the disruption. This has provided reassurance and helped maintain steadiness for the young person and the staff. A new manager has been appointed and is in the process of submitting her application to Ofsted.

Leaders and managers have identified areas of weakness in practice and there is an action plan to address these. Some of these areas had been actioned before the inspection. Despite this, further work is needed to ensure staff practice is strengthened to ensure they provide authoritative and consistent care to the young person.

The home is welcoming and homely. The young person's bedroom is well furnished, reflecting her tastes and individuality. Although clean, it was very untidy and fell below reasonable standards expected. For example, there were dishes, food and clothing on the floor.

Several staff have not had the necessary training to adequately meet the needs of the young person. This includes mandatory and child-specific training. The responsible individual is taking proactive steps to address this. This shortfall is in part due to the number of new staff and delays in the availability of training because of COVID-19.

Staff and the managers promote an inclusive and respectful culture in the home. Staff's practice towards the young person reflects these values. Staff spoke of

feeling especially well supported by each other and by the current managers. This is contributing to building confidence in their practice.

The registered individual and newly appointed manager show enthusiasm and determination to deliver sustained progress and to continue to develop the service in the best interests of the young person.

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—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))</p> <p>This relates to the registered person ensuring—</p> <p>that children's internet and mobile phone access is managed by the staff in a way that ensures a reasonable duty of care in providing online age-appropriate safeguarding;</p> <p>to assess children's online safety online, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce risk;</p>	<p>1 July 2021</p>

<p>staff take appropriate action to safeguard children if they leave the home at night;</p> <p>timely action is taken in response to safeguarding precautions, as identified by the manager, including the installation of CCTV outside the home.</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—</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(b)(c)(e))</p>	1 July 2021
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	1 July 2021
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p>	1 July 2021

at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification.
(Regulation 31 (2)(a))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the children's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them. In particular, ensure that the child's bedroom is kept to a reasonable standard of tidiness. ('Guide to the quality standards including the children's homes regulations', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2624723

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider:

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

Responsible individual: Paula Bates

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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