

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC015254
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Castle Homes Limited
Registered person address	The Manor House High Street, Rothwell KETTERING Northamptonshire NN14 6BQ
Responsible individual	Shelley Frances Whiting
Registered manager	Helen Clare Llewellyn
Date of last inspection	19/03/2014

Inspection date	12/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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Young people make exceptional progress in all areas of their lives while living in this home. They receive highly individualised and well-planned care from an extremely committed, skilled and consistent staff team. Consequently, young people are provided with an excellent opportunity to address their individual difficulties and reach their full potential.

Young people living in this home present as extremely happy and settled. They have excellent relationships with staff and they know that staff want the best for them. Young people feel safe and are kept safe. As a result, their lives quickly stabilise and their self-esteem and confidence improve significantly.

Thorough risk strategies are extremely effective at ensuring that risks young people pose to themselves or others are minimised without compromising their participation in a wide range of activities. Excellent multi-professional working ensures that young people benefit from holistic packages of support which meet their needs to a high standard. Young people start to realise their own potential and develop achievable aspirations for the future.

The management of this home is extremely strong. The Registered Manager has great insight and understanding of the complex needs of the young people living in

the home. Rigorous monitoring and analysis by the manager, in close consultation with in-house specialist therapeutic services, ensures that young people's care plans are frequently reviewed and updated. This helps to ensure that young people continue to be provided with optimum standards of individualised care. Although no requirements or recommendations are made as a result of this inspection, the home's development plan has targets to further improve practice and outcomes for young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a large private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate five boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties or a learning disability. The home offers a therapeutic service to boys with assessed needs linked to sexually inappropriate behaviour. The home has a school and this is registered with the Department for Education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2014	Interim	good progress
09/10/2013	Full	good
17/12/2012	Interim	good progress
13/06/2012	Full	good

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people achieve exceptional outcomes from their starting points while living in this home. One professional stated: 'You see young people start to thrive when they move to this home. They go to school, they start achieving, they become proud of themselves and they develop aspirations. Another said: 'The progress has been amazing. I would never have envisaged it in such a short time.' Young people grow in confidence and they develop a range of life skills. As a result, their life chances are significantly improved.

Young people who have previously struggled to attend school or achieve educationally do so while living in this home. All fully participate with creative and individualised packages of education and develop an enthusiasm for learning. Attendance at school and the academic progress young people make is excellent. A social worker commented in respect of a young person: 'He has passed his GCSEs and is now undertaking a level 3 college course. This was not expected before he came to live here.' Young people develop aspirations and a sense of achievement. Consequently, their opportunities and choices in adulthood are greatly improved.

Young people enjoy vastly improved physical health as a result of living in this home. They benefit from attending routine health appointments such as the dentist and the optician. They benefit from eating a healthy diet, engaging in physical activity and from having regular and consistent routines. One young person said: 'I did not eat healthily before. Now I have regular meals and regular bedtimes. I feel much healthier and happier and I can now learn better and do well.' Improved physical health helps raise young people's self-esteem and self-confidence.

All young people are fully engaging with specialist therapeutic support. This, and the support young people receive from staff, has assisted young people to make excellent progress emotionally and behaviourally. It has also resulted in levels of risk young people pose to others reducing significantly. A social worker commented: 'The work done by the therapist has been excellent. This young person has gone from being assessed as a high risk when he arrived to now being a low risk to others.' The therapy provided helps young people to explore the reasons for their past behaviours, explore ways to come to terms with past traumas and move forward in their lives. This impacts positively on young people's ability to form appropriate relationships and ultimately helps to provide them with an improved sense of emotional well-being.

Young people's relationships with family members improve significantly while living in this home. For some, this has resulted in contact being re-established after many years of having no contact. For others, it has resulted in levels of contact increasing and young people enjoying spending overnight stays with family members. One social worker said: 'The staff are excellent at promoting and supporting contact and helping

young people develop their relationships with their family.' Young people are delighted by this as relationships with family members are very important to them. Not only does this provide young people with an opportunity to understand their heritage, it also provides an opportunity for young people to have an improved family support network in the future.

Young people are extremely well prepared for their move from this placement, whether it is a move to a foster placement or a move towards independence. They have significantly improved levels of confidence as they develop life and coping skills. A young person who has moved on from this home said: 'I have learnt a lot during my time in this home. I now have excellent life skills. I am now teaching my peers things like how to prepare CVs, personal statements for jobs, cooking and stress management skills.' Increased confidence and well-developed life skills have assisted and prepared young people greatly when they move on to the next stage of their lives.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people enjoy extremely positive and constructive relationships with staff and very good relationships with each other. A young person commented: 'The staff are fantastic. They really help me. They will help with anything. They really care.' Observations of staff and young people also demonstrate excellent relationships. There is a lot of fun and laughter and high levels of praise for young people. A social worker said in respect of a young person: 'Before he came here he was unhappy. Now he is happy, he is expressing himself and he is moving forward.' The positive relationships young people have with staff and the extremely welcoming and nurturing environment enables young people to have a secure emotional base from which they can develop.

Young people receive excellent standards of care and support because staff are skilled and experienced and have an exceptionally good understanding of young people's individual needs. A social worker said: 'Staff work on the young person's strengths and have a good grasp of his complex needs. He is receiving consistency of care and he now has excellent routines.' A young person said; 'Living here has taught me about my behaviour. I now know how to act.' Supportive and consistent care helps young people make excellent progress with their behaviour. As a result, young people are able to live together in a settled environment. This helps them emotionally by enhancing their sense of security and stability.

Staff provide an exceptional level of support in relation to education and the development of life skills. For example, one young person commented: 'If it was not for this home, I would not have been so successful in terms of education.' A young person's relative said: 'The staff are very encouraging and want him to achieve in education. His hygiene has also come on so much. He is now really proud of his appearance and he looks after himself so well.' Young people are actively encouraged

to meet and exceed their targets and goals. Their achievements are celebrated by staff. As a result, young people feel valued, resulting in raised self-esteem. One young person stated: 'I am really proud of myself and staff are really proud of what I have achieved. My progress is fantastic, it is through the roof.'

Staff and young people benefit greatly from the support of in-house therapeutic and educational services. This, and extremely strong and positive working relationships with other professionals, ensures that young people have the best opportunity to access appropriate support and address their difficulties. In addition, detailed individualised care plans, highly skilled staff and high staffing ratios ensure that the care planned for young people is consistently delivered to a high standard. This provides young people with the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

Staff are extremely proactive in ensuring that all young people have access to appropriate, extensive and individualised leisure pursuits. All young people are engaged in a number of different leisure interests which they really enjoy. They also participate in community activities such as delivering the local community newsletter. Young people also engage in charitable events. For example, the home raises money for the hearing dogs' charity and young people have the opportunity to help socialise young puppies that come to visit them at the home. The participation in leisure and community activities enables young people to be an integral part of their community. It also provides them with an opportunity to have fun, socialise, stay healthy and increase their awareness of social issues.

Young people are fully respected and valued in this home. Their views are continually sought in respect of the day-to-day running of the home through monthly young people's meetings, regular key working sessions, and through consultation documents which young people are provided with. Young people feel strongly that their views are listened to. They are fully involved in their own care planning. A social worker said: 'Staff listen to young people but also work in accordance with the risks which affect young people. They balance the risk and wishes of young people well and are really good at explaining things to young people so they understand why their wishes cannot always be fulfilled.' Consequently, young people's individual and diverse needs are extremely well met. Young people feel listened to and they understand and accept the reasons why their views cannot always take precedence.

The home is maintained to a high standard. It provides a very comfortable and homely environment. Young people's bedrooms are well equipped and personalised. Young people's achievements and activities are celebrated. Communal areas within the home are decorated with many photographs of young people engaging in activities and there is a wall dedicated to young people's certificates of achievements. This reminds young people of how proud the staff are of them and further improves their self-esteem.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Young people consistently say they feel safe and they are safe living in this home. One young person said: 'It feels like a safe place to live. Staff are supportive, they are always there, there is always someone to talk to.' Another young person said: 'If I am five minutes late, they will call me and check I am OK. Staff make me feel safe because they are so caring and I can really trust them.' The emotionally safe and secure environment young people are living in provides them with a strong sense of safety and wellbeing.

Excellent safeguarding procedures implemented by staff in addition to high staffing ratios and work undertaken with young people in respect of risky behaviour and safeguarding issues further enhances the levels of safety within this home. For example, in respect of bullying in the home, a young person said: 'There is no bullying here. It is a relaxed home and young people get on. Having a 'bully buster' helps. Bullying is not allowed. There is zero tolerance to it. It is a safe place to live.' Consequently, proactive anti-bullying initiatives implemented in this home provide a further safeguard for young people.

Staff are very well trained in respect of safeguarding practices and they are extremely aware of how to keep young people safe. A member of staff commented: 'Safeguarding is at the forefront of everything we do.' Although young people very rarely go missing from this home, staff know the procedures to follow to minimise the risk of this happening and what to do if it happens. Excellent staff knowledge, good staffing levels and excellent working relationships with the police has offered young people a high level of protection in respect of this risk.

Young people are protected as a result of extremely comprehensive risk management plans which are well implemented by staff. Young people who have been assessed as posing a significant risk to themselves or others are carefully monitored at all times. This does not, however, prohibit young people from participating in a wide range of activities within the local community. Rather, robust risk assessments enable young people to enjoy new experiences and take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development without either their own, or others', safety being compromised.

The home's embedded ethos of proactive behaviour management and the high levels of support young people receive to self-regulate their behaviours is a significant strength of this home. Young people are motivated by positive incentives which are offered in return for positive behaviour. Staff discuss with young people what strategies they believe will be most effective when they are feeling challenged. Strategies and clear aims are then agreed and incorporated into each young person's behaviour management plans and risk assessments. Consequently, young people feel consulted and valued. They understand the aims of their plans and this helps motivate them to work towards the goals of their care plans. As a result of highly effective behaviour management strategies, the use of sanctions is rare and physical intervention has not been required since well before the last interim inspection.

Regular multi-disciplinary reviews and excellent senior oversight of behaviour management ensures that young people's behaviour plans and risk assessments remain effective and that practice in this area remains of an exceedingly high standard.

Recruitment and selection processes are robust and safe. All new staff have been recruited and checked appropriately. This ensures that only those people who are suitable to work with young people and do not pose a risk to young people are employed.

The home is a physically safe and secure environment. All health and safety issues are addressed thoroughly. Young people confirm that fire drills take place regularly and were able to advise me what to do in the event of a fire. As a result, young people's health and well-being are better safeguarded.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The Registered Manager is very experienced. She has 15 years of management experience and has been in post as the manager of this home for the last three years. She holds the required equivalent management qualifications required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

The manager is inspiring and motivational. Her enthusiasm and high standards filter down to the staff team. A member of staff said: 'The management is superb, the home is really well organised.' Staff share the manager's vision of ensuring that the quality of care and outcomes for young people continues to improve. Staff morale is extremely high and a cohesive and experienced staff team ensure that young people are consistently and exceptionally well supported.

Staff are exceptionally well trained. Induction programmes are comprehensive. A new member of staff said: 'I have received excellent training from day one and the staff team have been fantastic and supportive and can't do enough to help.' Experienced staff continue to receive refresher training in key areas such as safeguarding, first aid, fire safety and behaviour management. All staff also undertake more specialised training in respect of a wide variety of issues that affect the young people they are caring for. For example, staff have received training in respect of child sexual exploitation, sexually harmful behaviour, risk assessment awareness and trauma. In addition, staff have weekly access to the in-house therapist to discuss specific aspects of young people's behaviour to gain further insight and advice regarding their specific needs. As a result, staff are extremely well equipped to meet the individual needs of the young people living in this home.

Staff attend regular team meetings which discuss practice issues as well as the policies and procedures which underpin staff practice. They receive regular supervision. A member of staff commented: 'My supervision is of a high quality, we

discuss the young people I am key working and I can seek advice from our therapist on top of that if required.' Productive team meetings and regular high quality supervision ensures that practice is monitored and it provides scope for further improvements in the delivery of care.

Managers and leaders comprehensively and effectively monitor the progress young people make while living in this home. Monthly, high quality progress reports enable social workers, parents and carers to see what young people have achieved over time, educationally, emotionally, behaviourally and socially. This home has a focus on reducing levels of risk young people pose to enable them to safely live in the community in the future. Monthly reviews with young people regarding their individual risk assessments enables young people, their social workers and also their relatives to clearly see the significant progress young people are making over time. These monitoring systems demonstrate that the home is very effective at reducing the levels of risk young people pose. They also demonstrate how young people's life chances are significantly improving as a result of living in this home.

Quality assurance monitoring, both internally and externally, is effective in identifying strengths in the home as well as minor shortfalls. Both the internal and external systems provide for excellent consultation with young people, parents (where appropriate), staff members and other stakeholders. This ensures that the quality of the service continues to be robustly analysed in order to drive improvement. This and the home's development plan demonstrate that this is a service which is fixed on continual improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.