

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	13/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC015254
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Castle Homes Limited
Registered provider address	The Manor House, High Street, Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6BQ

Responsible individual	Patricia Gregory
Registered manager	Helen Llewellyn
Inspector	Trish Palmer

Inspection date	13/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged as outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.	
The children continue to make excellent progress. They have the opportunity to participate in activities in the community, taking their risks and vulnerabilities into account. This means that they can build and maintain positive friendships in the community. The manager, in consultation with a parent and a social worker, has undertaken a risk assessment. Consequently, a child can now stay at a friend's house overnight. The children have built positive relationships with a dedicated, accomplished, experienced and stable staff team that is comprised of staff who know and understand the children's individual needs. Good interactions between the staff and the children were observed during the inspection. A child commented, 'There are always staff around you can talk to and they are good at helping you sort things out.' Another child commented, 'I have settled well here because it's quiet and staff explain things to you and don't just tell you to do things. I wasn't very well behaved in my last place, but I like it here.' The manager has the relevant experience and qualifications to run the home and is supported by an experienced deputy. There were no requirements or recommendations from the last inspection. The staff understand the importance of education, and support and motivate the children to attend. All of the children attend college, the organisation's schools or the local school. There is good communication between the education providers and the staff. The staff supported a child who was struggling with school by attending school with him and supporting him until he had settled. This was successful and he is now able to attend school without the support of staff in the classroom. This shows that the staff actively support the children to attend education and give them additional assistance when necessary. A child commented, 'Things are going well at college, and the manager gets an email every week to tell her how well I'm doing.' A parent commented, 'He now attends college and is doing well. A year ago he wouldn't have even thought about going to college.'	

Two children have moved into the home since the last inspection. Due to the circumstances, they did not have the opportunity to visit the home before the move. The staff understand that transitions can be difficult for the children and ensure that they are given a thorough induction into the home. This approach supported the children to settle quickly.

Communication between the staff, the social workers and the parents is good. A social worker commented, 'Staff are really good at keeping me updated. They have done better with him than anyone else. They have on-site therapeutic interventions which was instant and has really helped him.' A parent commented, 'Before he moved to the home I was getting phone calls daily about his behaviour; since being at the home I have had one. Staff contact me about his positives as well, which is good to hear.'

Risk assessments are robust and are reviewed and amended when needed. The children are fully involved in completing their risk assessments. This supports them to work with the staff to look at how they can reduce the risks that have been identified in the assessments. Before a child goes on an activity, the staff will make sure the child understands the potential risks and how they can keep themselves safe. The children sign their risk assessments, along with the staff, to say that they have read and understood them. This shows that the staff are alert to potential risks and that they appreciate the importance of the children understanding risks and how they can keep themselves safe.

The staff receive regular supervision. They attend staff meetings to support them in working in a consistent way with the children. All of the staff have completed their mandatory training and have finished, or are in line to finish, their national vocation (NVQ) award level 3. One of the housekeepers is also completing the NVQ 3; this shows that the manager supports the development of the team as a whole.

The children attend monthly house meetings in which they discuss a wide variety of topics. They also use these meetings to discuss activities, decor and menus. The manager writes a reply, which is read back to the children. The children also have consultations meetings, which are documented. One child asked for more board games, another asked for a new bed. The manager records the actions that she takes and the staff members inform the children of the decisions. This shows that the children's wishes and feelings are actively listened to and valued.

The children each have a monthly key-work session, which looks at their progress and any current issues. They also have one-to-one workshops three times a week, which look at a wide variety of issues, such as independence, education, friendships or issues with which they may need some support. The children also attend monthly 'Bully Buster' meetings in which they talk about what bullying is and how it can make people feel, and take part in quizzes. This shows that the staff are forward-thinking, that they use many ways to involve the children in consultation and that they support them to keep safe.

The staff understand the importance of the children learning independence in line with their age, understanding and ability and in consultation with their social workers. The staff use a life-skills book with the children who are ready to work towards increased independence. This supports them with budgeting, life skills, cooking and using public transport. One child explained how he now uses public transport and was able to talk about how he keeps himself safe. He also has driving lessons. The home pays half and he pays the rest with his bursary from college. Other children have worked towards having free time in the community. This shows that the staff are not risk averse and actively support the children to manage their free time while teaching them how to stay safe.

The children who were spoken with understood how to complain if they needed to. There is information in the games room on which organisations they could contact if they did not want to talk to the staff. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

There have been 12 negative consequences implemented since the last inspection. The children comment on and sign these. The consequences are fair and proportionate and the manager comments on and evaluates them.

The staff understand the importance of recognising the children's achievements or acknowledging their actions when they have helped others. There have been 26 positive consequences implemented, since the last inspection which range from a child receiving money towards something they are saving for, to meals out or extra activities. The children sign and comment on these, as does the manager. This shows the children that the staff value their achievements.

Children have not gone missing from the home since the last inspection. There is a clear protocol for staff to follow should this happen.

The children have clear, individualised placement plans, which support the staff in working with the children. The children have the opportunity to read, comment on and sign the plans. A key worker has completed a more child-friendly placement plan for a younger child, which is easier for him to understand. This shows that the staff are proactive in making placement plans meaningful and purposeful for the children. The social workers sign these plans at their six-weekly meetings, which take place in the home. This means that the staff and the social workers are working in a consistent way with the children.

Monitoring remains robust. Finished checks are sent to the head office every month in order to ensure that checks are being undertaken and actioned.

The home is in a rural location and children are involved in activities in the village. Recently, the children and the staff joined local residents in a litter pick. This shows that the children value being part of the local community. The home is decorated to a high standard. The children are involved in doing chores around the house. There are photos of the children around the house, and it has a warm and

nurturing feeling. The children are involved in choosing the decor for the house and have been able to personalise their bedrooms.

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 who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. The home offers a therapeutic service to boys with assessed needs that are linked to sexually inappropriate behaviour. The home has a school, which is registered with the Department for Education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2016	Full	Outstanding
16/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
20/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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