

SC015254

Registered provider: Castle Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to five boys. The remit of the home is to care for children with emotional and social needs. Children may also have learning disabilities.

Four children were living at the home at the time of this inspection.

The manager is suitably experienced and registered with Ofsted in March 2023.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2024

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: 4 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/01/2023	Full	Good
28/06/2021	Full	Outstanding
19/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
06/08/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, four children have moved into the home and four children have moved out. Although transitions for children have been managed well, such changes have had a negative impact on some children's overall experiences. This is because staff have been unable to meet children's needs within their placement.

The home provides a clean and spacious place for children to live. Children have contributed to the decor of the home. Children personalise their bedrooms according to their unique tastes in music and interests. A large garden area and 'snug' provide space for children to enjoy leisure activities.

The progress children make in relation to their education is mixed. One child aspires to complete their education and join an apprenticeship scheme. However, for other children, there is a lack of educational planning and purposeful advocacy. For example, one child was out of education for six months. Staff struggle to engage some children in online tutoring. One child did not continue with their education due to school exclusion.

All children receive support from primary care services. Children are registered with a dentist, optician and medical practitioner. Staff have not updated one child's health plan. There was one serious incident that related to a child's medication; however, staff took prompt action to manage this situation and keep the child safe.

Children are offered therapeutic support. However, staff struggle to encourage some children to engage with this service.

All children work towards independence through a life skills booklet. This is a comprehensive guide. The guide encourages children to develop skills such as cooking and using a washing machine. It helps children know where to go for health advice and how to manage their money.

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

Children's plans and risk assessments are not yet reflective of their needs and risk-taking behaviours. Safety plans are not consistently up to date. This shortfall increases risks for children because staff are not given the necessary information to keep children safe.

Children express their views through their discussions with staff. The children's guide is detailed but does not explain the supervision and monitoring of children using bedroom door alarms.

Staff only physically restrain children as a last resort. Records of physical interventions show detailed recordings and debriefs. Staff use a range of distraction techniques and positive language and affirmations to help de-escalate behaviours. Police call-outs to manage incidents have increased recently. Restrictions relating to children's independence time are not well explained in the home's statement of purpose. The behaviour management techniques for children require improvement.

Not all staff understand concerns of criminal exploitation and associated risks. One staff member did not think a child was at risk despite concerns noted in their records. On occasion, this child was missing from home and known to visit places where they were unsafe. There was one serious incident of potential criminal exploitation; however, staff did not complete appropriate checks or report this to the police. Staff have since undertaken training in criminal exploitation prevention.

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

A compassionate and caring staff team provides care to children. The manager is enthusiastic in their role.

The home's statement of purpose does not provide clear information about the type of care that will be offered to children. This is necessary to ensure that staff can provide safe and secure care to children who have bespoke safety needs.

The information on children's electronic files and paper files did not always match. This is because staff are not working cohesively to record children's information.

Staff have regular supervision, and all staff have a contract of supervision on file. Supervision is reflective and helps staff to identify strengths and areas to develop. Children's care and safety needs are regularly discussed with the manager.

New staff have a comprehensive induction programme. Some staff have worked at the home for many years and enjoy their role.

Staff complete a range of detailed, focused discussions with children. This helps children to understand their behaviours and make better choices.

The manager has completed a workforce development plan. This offered some level of oversight and professional scrutiny. However, the manager could not clearly evidence that requirements for regulation 35 and regulation 36 that were set at the last inspection were met. For such reasons, these requirements have been restated.

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, The 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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)) In particular, ensure that there is a plan in place to support each child to make educational progress.	1 May 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))	1 May 2024
Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (2))	1 May 2024

In particular, ensure that the necessity to limit independence time for children is clearly identified in the statement of purpose and described in each child's care plan. This should be reviewed on a regular basis.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b))	1 May 2024
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36 (1)(a))	1 May 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	1 May 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the responsible local authority makes sure that the children are provided with appropriate healthcare services. The health of children must be assessed at regular intervals, and the child's care plan must include an individual health plan setting out the approach that the placing authority will follow and the desired outcomes required to meet the child's health needs. These outcomes, recorded in the health plan, will be the basis on which the registered person will be expected to meet regulation 10 (2)(a)(i) in the health and well-being standard for each child in their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.4)

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: SC015254

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Limited

Registered provider address: The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey
GU21 6HT

Responsible individual: Helen Llewellyn

Registered manager: Sarah King

Inspector

Kamal Bhamra, Social Care Inspector

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