

SC020545

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a large private organisation. It provides care for up to five children with complex behaviours due to their childhood experiences. The home was registered with Ofsted in December 1998.

The manager is newly registered with Ofsted and holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/03/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
28/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
26/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. One child has lived at the home for four years and the other child has lived at the home for over two months.

Managers and staff work well with partner agencies to support children to have positive transitions into the home from very unsettled starting points. Staff use a consistent child-centred approach, which takes account of the trauma children have experienced. This enables them to provide children with individualised care. One child's social worker told the inspector that the home considered her child's likes and dislikes prior to meeting the child for the first time. Staff's use of this information in their initial meeting immediately put the child at ease. This allowed the child to develop a sense of belonging quickly after moving into the home.

Staff share nurturing relationships with children, and support children to understand and express their emotions positively. Children enjoy spending time with the staff and they feel valued and cared for. One child was observed by the inspector searching for his swimming goggles, and excitedly talking about going swimming with staff. The child told the inspector they enjoyed playing football with staff and gave the home a rating of 10 out of 10, as an indicator of how much they liked living at the home.

The managers and staff provide children with encouragement and support to pursue their individual interests and encourage children to try new and exciting activities. One child's parent told the inspector that her daughter often declines activities due to social anxieties, but staff recently encouraged her to go to a film studio tour which she thoroughly enjoyed. As a result of the trusting relationships children have with staff, they feel safe and supported to explore new experiences.

Overall, children enjoy living in a spacious, comfortable and homely environment. Children's rooms are clean and tidy, and personalised with decor that reflects each child's personal interests. Staff work hard to create an atmosphere that is warm, child friendly, relaxed yet interactive. However, there are areas of the home that require repair to enable there to be a consistent homely feel throughout. For example, a stairway panel is damaged and is in need of repair.

Staff encourage and support children to attend school. One child who previously struggled with attending school has achieved 98% attendance, and another child who was previously excluded from school is managing a very slow reintegration to an education setting.

However, one child currently has very limited access to an educational placement. Managers and staff have not sufficiently challenged the placing authority to address the child's lack of educational placement. In addition, managers have not put in

place sufficient structure or routines for the considerable amount of time the child is not in education each week.

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

Staff know the children well and understand their complex needs. As a result, there are rarely significant incidents in the home. The number of incidents has reduced significantly since the last inspection.

Staff use effective consequences, which are appropriate and specific to individual incidents. For example, on one occasion, following the misuse of a mobile phone, the child's phone was removed while staff carried out safety and reflection work with the child. In addition, staff sought guidance from relevant professionals and put in place monitoring systems. There have been no other incidents of this nature following this response and action taken.

Incidents requiring physical restraint with children are extremely rare. For example, there has been one incident since the last inspection. The responsible individual's review of the incident is good, and the child and staff were spoken to and provided with an opportunity to reflect on and learn from the incident. As a result, children are more aware of when and why staff need to safeguard children and respond well.

Overall, staff and managers have a good knowledge of safeguarding matters and the protocols in place, so respond effectively to safeguarding concerns in the home. However, following the change in a child's care plan that resulted in the child having more free time out in the community, managers failed to update children's risk assessments and safeguarding protocols to update and inform staff's practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The current registered manager started in post in September 2022 and has supported the home to progress. She is fully aware of the needs of the children in her care and works well with professionals to advocate for them. She has also made changes to improve the care that children receive.

The registered manager is passionate, motivated and keen to develop the service. Staff say they feel supported by the managers to improve their practice. They have regular supervisions. These, alongside team meetings and training, contribute to staff development. As a result of staff's recent report writing and PACE (playful, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) training, staff have grown in confidence, and the introduction of therapeutic practice has begun to positively impact on the care children receive. Consequently, skilled staff effectively support children.

Managers and staff regularly consult with children on the care that they receive, and children know how to make a complaint. The staff and managers are proactive in gaining children's views to inform developments in the home.

External professionals have commented positively on the home. One professional spoke to the inspector about her child sharing 'strong relationships with staff who have been a constant for them and have supported the child to manage relationships with her family and peers'. Another professional told the inspector that she is 'happy with the progress made by her child, who is very settled and has had no missing from care incidents since living at the home'.

Manager has monitoring processes in place to have oversight of the care children receive. The manager has made improvements to the monitoring systems since the last inspection. For example, she now completes weekly and monthly internal monitoring reviews, alongside monthly checks of children's files. As a result, the manager knows the home's strengths and weaknesses and has taken action to make improvements. However, the manager's systems failed to identify two recording errors in children's medications records.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that risks associated with changes in children's care plans are considered and arrangements are put in place to reduce the risk of harm to the child.	10 July 2023
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 a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(vii)) In particular, if a child has very limited access to an education provision, the registered person must challenge relevant agencies to ensure that the child's educational needs are met.	10 July 2023

Recommendation

- The registered persons should ensure that medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15).

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: SC020545

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sophie Nicholls

Registered manager: Jemma Mitchell

Inspector

Sharon Bourne, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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