

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC020576
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Castle Homes Care Ltd
Registered provider address	80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual	Shelley Whiting
Registered manager	Deborah Bassett
Inspector	Andrew Hewston

Inspection date	12/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC020576

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make meaningful progress, with significant improvement in school attendance.
- Young people receive all the necessary support to stay physically and mentally well.
- Young people are supported to take appropriate levels of responsibility and benefit from appropriate supervision.
- Staff have a strong commitment to improving the safety of young people in their care.
- Behaviour management processes are good, with minimal use of sanctions and restraints.
- The management team is committed to delivering excellent childcare.
- The registered manager is fully accountable for the experience and progress that young people make.
- The registered manager ensures that staff are supported, supervised and accountable in their work with young people.
- Staff communicate well with professionals, using this partnership to inform young people's assessments and plans.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a large private organisation. It offers care up to five young people, primarily with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/09/2015	Full	Good
25/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/10/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people enjoy being at the home and are making good progress. Young people are generally positive about being at the home, understanding the reasons for being there and being able to talk about their plans for the future. Young people enjoy different activities and, although most of their time is primarily spent on activities relating to playing games on different consoles, they still enjoy varied trips out. A recent trip to a snow centre allowed them all to try out tobogganing. One young person was involved in the national citizen award scheme over the summer. This involved going away and participating in projects, including raising money for charity. Another young person has been involved in washing cars. This, again, was, to raise money for charity. These projects help to develop young people's self-esteem, sense of personal achievement and an increased appreciation of the principle of 'the Big Society'. Contact arrangements are organised from the point of young people's admission. Young people are supported to keep in touch with their families. One mother stated: 'As well as seeing him regularly, I get monthly reports to keep me up to date. They also ring me to tell me if there are any problems, so that we can talk about how the home can help him.' Young people's health is consistently supported. All young people attend regular appointments with dentists, opticians and nurses, ensuring that they are healthy. Excellent procedures are in place to support young people's mental health, with regular psychologist appointments, including detailed information shared by the staff and some feedback to the team. The staff are also supported through this service, enhancing their own mental resilience. All young people are involved in developing their educational ability and knowledge. The majority of young people attend the organisation's school and others attend college to improve their independence skills. One social worker highlighted the significant improvement in the young person's attendance as being down to the support of the staff. The home is a pleasant environment where young people are able to relax and spend time with their peers or alone. There is an ongoing process for redecoration to keep the home looking fresh. Young people are encouraged to personalise their own rooms, and money is available for posters and pictures. This develops their feeling of belonging at the home.	

Young people's views are consistently sought through a range of different forums, including fortnightly young people's meetings, key-work sessions and everyday discussions. Young people are aware of how to raise concerns if they are unhappy and, although these are rare, complaints are responded to swiftly, ensuring that all are happy with the outcome.

Strong arrangements are in place to support young people leaving the home. Young people are involved with budgeting and cooking, as well as being expected to be involved with a range of tasks in which they engage in the community. All these opportunities increase their ability to cope when they are living on their own.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Safeguarding systems are strong and, when allegations are made, the manager ensures that swift action is taken. This includes ensuring that all necessary professionals become involved. Risk assessments are regularly updated, with staff signing all new assessments. This helps to ensure that they are aware of the differing needs of the young people. The manager ensures that procedures are responsive, to reduce the risks of young people going missing from care. Consequently, missing from care incidents are extremely rare. Effective systems are in place that promote positive behaviours and support the development of young people's social interactions. Young people have reward systems that relate to differing aspects of their lives at the home. This includes promoting education and improving personal hygiene. When negative behaviours occur, appropriate consequences are put in place. These are often linked to restorative justice to ensure that young people learn from their actions. The use of restraint to manage behaviour is only as a last resort. Records completed by staff include young people's feedback. This allows young people to examine their behaviours and learn how to respond appropriately. Strong recruitment processes help to keep young people safe. Young people are involved in the interview process by passing on their observations to staff, following the applicant spending time with them. This process ensures that young people are an integral part of deciding which staff are to work with them.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The home is exceptionally well managed by a registered manager who has a significant level of experience in addition to their level 4 registered managers award. Her deputy has a wealth of residential experience and helps to strengthen the management team. The manager knows all aspects of young people's care plans and has a detailed knowledge, from their backgrounds and life histories to their future plans. Together, the manager and deputy work hard to establish and lead an experienced team of staff who consistently deliver exceptional care. This has benefited young people immensely and contributed to them making significant progress in many aspects of their lives. The manager consistently challenges ineffective practice and is able to discuss differing reviews with social workers. The management consistently strives to improve the service delivered. No recommendations or requirements were made at the last inspection of the home. However, a formal development plan is supported by a more personalised series of goals that it would like further to achieve, highlighting the high standards that it expects of both the staff team and the young people. Relationships with external parties are consistently positive due to the high level of care provided. Both professionals and young people express their appreciation of staff's efforts. One social worker highlighted that 'The management of the home is exceptional. Communication has been brilliant. I always know what he is doing.' A parent also stated: 'I have nothing but praise for the home. I have an excellent relationship with their key worker, and the manager makes sure that she has time for you to talk about all sorts of issues.' The home's statement of purpose gives a clear description of the level of care provided. Excellent matching assessments ensure that the young people placed at the home are compatible with the aims of the home and with each other. These assessments also link well to the strong risk assessment process. The team is made up of a good mix of genders, ages and ethnicities. One young person told the inspector, 'The staff really complement each other well. It means that there is always someone whom you can chat to, whatever mood you are in.' The majority of staff have a relevant childcare qualification, while others are completing this. New staff are well inducted and have their competency assessed throughout their induction and probationary period.	

Staff have confirmed to the inspector that they are extremely well supported and regularly receive purposeful supervision from either the manager or deputy manager. All staff have their performance appraised annually and have personal development plans in place. The manager ensures that the training record is kept up to date so that all staff complete mandatory courses. In addition, the management team keeps a keen eye on ensuring that staff are able to access additional courses when they take place.

The manager takes appropriate action following significant events, including contacting all appropriate authorities and providing detailed information about the event and the home's response. This allows all involved to be well informed of the situation regarding the young person.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 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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