

# SC020576

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 operated by a private company and has been registered with Ofsted since 2019. The home is registered to provide care for up to five children who may have specific emotional needs and may have experienced trauma.

At the time of inspection, three children were living in the home. All were spoken to.

The registered manager is suitably skilled and experienced and has been in post since 2016.

### Inspection dates: 29 and 30 October 2024

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|

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|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 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:** 19 March 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 19/03/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 06/03/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 23/06/2021      | Full            | Good                 |
| 05/02/2020      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

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

The three children living in the home have lived there for between one and four years. No children have moved in or out of the home since the previous inspection. Children are kept safe and have well-established routines and boundaries, however, their progress is variable. Systems in place are not always sufficiently flexible to support the children's ongoing needs and development. Opportunities for children to explore new experiences and for developing interests and hobbies are limited.

Children have positive relationships with the staff. Staff have established routines and boundaries to help the children feel settled in their environment. However, these can sometimes be stifling. For example, one child recently started walking out of the home and going missing on a frequent basis but would return later in a settled state. Strategies to manage this were focused on preventing the child from leaving the home. Staff failed to consider the reasons why the child might want to leave, such as boredom or to release some energy. Opportunities to identify alternative ways of managing the child's behaviour were missed.

The children have limited access to activities. Activities are largely in-house and consist mostly of time spent on gaming devices. There is a large garden, but this has not been developed to make it an appealing space for children to play. Children are discouraged from playing ball games due to potential complaints from neighbours. None of the children have hobbies or interests that they regularly participate in outside the home. Opportunities to explore and participate in new experiences, activities and hobbies would help children to have fun and could boost their self-confidence.

The home is well maintained, clean and tidy. Children's rooms are personalised and cosy. The children like their rooms and were proud to show them. There are plenty of communal spaces with games and toys available for children. A housekeeper is employed to help maintain the home to a high standard. This gives children a home they can be proud of.

Children are given few opportunities to explore their individuality and cultural heritage. Staff have not helped children to explore their heritage and understand their life story.

There are few pictures displayed of the children and minimal work is done to create memories of their time in the home. Some photos of the children are stored digitally, but there has been no progress to turn them into long-lasting memories. This is particularly important as one of the children will soon be moving to independent living after four years at the home. Another child is particularly talented at art but none of their artwork is displayed. This does not help children to develop a sense of being loved and belonging.

Children do not always receive timely specialist support to meet their needs. When the children first moved into the home, they were able to access support from an in-house therapist. This ceased when the therapist left in March 2024, and they have yet to be replaced. Managers and staff have not sought further support, despite the potential for this to be beneficial for children in helping them to understand and overcome their past traumas.

All children are supported to attend and engage in education specific to their needs. One child has recently started a college course that will help them with their chosen career. Staff support another child to continue to attend a school they went to before living in the home. This gave them some stability in their life when they moved in. When there are concerns about children's behaviours at school, staff work with education professionals to address the issues. This helps in preparing children for their futures.

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

Staff understand the risks to individual children and how to support them. Children's plans and risk assessments provide staff with clear guidance on the steps they need to take to help keep children safe. These are regularly updated to reflect emerging risks. Children say they feel safe living in the home.

Staff promote positive behaviour in the home. They help children to understand the expectations of them, through the use of rewards and consequences. For example, children are able to earn extra money for good behaviour. The manager maintains oversight of consequences used to ensure that they are proportionate. There have been no restrictive physical interventions used since the previous inspection. These strategies help children to reflect on the impact of their behaviour and learn from it.

Safeguarding incidents are generally rare in the home. However, staff know their responsibilities and the action they need to take if such a situation arises. One child at the home is currently going through an unsettled period and frequently leaving the home. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow when the child goes missing from the home to support their safe return.

Children benefit from individualised sessions to help them understand behaviours that may put themselves and others at risk. Staff use a sensitive and caring approach to discussing incidents in a way the child can understand. This helps children to reflect on the impact of their behaviours so that they can learn from them.

The arrangements for administering children's medication are safe. Staff have completed training and have had their competencies assessed.

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

Leaders' and managers' aspirations for the children are not always consistent. One child has made positive progress towards their future pathway. Progress for another child is limited and, in some areas, they have regressed. Approaches to support the child have been restrictive and inflexible and do not effectively support the child's journey to future independence.

There is a stable staff team in place to support the needs of the children. The manager has suitable experience to lead the home and the majority of the staff hold the relevant qualification for working with children in residential care. This ensures that children are cared for by staff with the knowledge and skills to do so.

Staff receive support and guidance to help them care for the children living in the home. This includes regular supervision sessions and appraisals which gives them opportunities to reflect on their learning and development needs. Staff have access to regular training and describe the training they have received as good. However, not all staff receive training relating to the children's specific needs. Without this training, managers cannot be assured that staff are fully able to meet all children's needs.

Children's wishes and views are not always heard. For example, there have been instances when children have made requests for specific activities or items for their rooms that have been dismissed or not taken forward. There has also been no recent input from the children in the meal plans. This does not help the children to feel valued.

There are several vacancies in the staff team. Managers are currently trying to recruit to these positions, however, staffing levels impact on staff's ability to take children on activities outside the home and to provide practical support for developing children's independence.

Feedback from external professionals is mostly positive about the support staff provide to the children. They say there is good communication from the home, particularly when incidents occur. They are confident that staff understand the children's needs and have established good routines. However, for one child, they felt that the child's progress was not as good as they would like, but they did understand the complexities. For another child, it was felt therapy was needed to help them move forward.

Managers and leaders maintain effective oversight of the home through regular monitoring and checks to help keep children safe, for example, reviews of children's care plans and ensuring the health and safety of the premises. This has enabled staff to act swiftly in response to potential risks to children.

# 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        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>develop the child's interests and hobbies;</p> <p>participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and</p> <p>make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and</p> <p>that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies.<br/>(Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))</p> | 1 December 2024 |
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 December 2024 |

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| <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult.<br/>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iv)(v)(vi))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that children are supported to develop a sense of identity in relation to their cultural heritage; that children are supported to receive the therapeutic help needed for them to overcome previous experiences of neglect and trauma; and for children working on independence skills to be given a range of opportunities to practise those skills before moving on.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                        |
| <p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>engage with them; and</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare;</p> <p>help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;</p> <p>help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child.<br/>(Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to understanding the reasons why children go missing and how these could be best managed to</p> | <p>1 December 2024</p> |

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| <p>keep them safe, while taking into account the child's wishes and feelings.</p> <p>In addition, ensuring that children receive regular opportunities to express their views in relation to their care, such as to request activities, items for their room and make menu choices. When children make reasonable requests, they must be carefully considered. When reasonable requests are not acted on, children must be given an open and honest account of the reasons for this decision in a timely way.</p>                                                                                                                                       |                        |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, not all staff have received training specific to the needs of children, for example, in relation to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.</p> | <p>1 December 2024</p> |

## 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:** SC020576

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Castle Homes Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** 2 Barton Close, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicester LE19 1SJ

**Responsible individual:** Laura Rider

**Registered manager:** Deborah Bassett

## Inspectors

Louise Naylor, Social Care Inspector

Menaka De Silva, Social Care Inspector

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