

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020630
Inspector	Elaine Cray
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Castle Homes Care Limited
Registered person address	Castle Homes Care Ltd, The Manor House High Street, Rothwell KETTERING Northamptonshire NN14 6BQ
Responsible individual	Shelley Frances Whiting
Registered manager	Dale John Berry
Date of last inspection	12/11/2014

Inspection date	18/03/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	There is no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

Young people have positive experiences at the home and they make good progress. They live in a nurturing, energetic and fun environment. Young people live in a comfortable and nurturing home and the house is well-maintained. Young people have taken part in choosing new décor and furnishings throughout the house. They take great pride in personalising their bedrooms and improvements that they and staff have made in the home. Participation in the running of the home gives young people a good sense of belonging.

Some young people do not like the rural location of the home; but they acknowledge this has helped them disassociate with serious risk taking activities. All young people appreciate the time and effort staff give to facilitating activities and meeting up with friends. Other young people like the location of the home. They enjoy playing in the grounds, have an interest in nature and help with the animals. They grow in self-esteem as they take responsibility and get rewards for looking after the home's chickens.

Young people settle well and feel welcome at the home because staff take time to talk about anxieties and give sensitive reassurance and clear expectations. Young people grow in emotional resilience because they build trusting relations with staff. Strong attachments enable young people to explore their emotions and challenges.

Young people enjoy a range of activities including bowling, trips out, cycling and football. Young people are healthier, including losing weight, because they keep active and eat healthily. Young people also enjoy activities that build their self-esteem and sense of responsibility. Some young people are channelling their football skills into trials for their college football team. While others are organising a charity bike ride.

Engagement is effective as staff find creative ways to involve young people at all stages of their placement planning. For example some young people enjoy making models and drawing pictures to help them understand their feelings and work towards their targets. The creative use of a 'target tree' means young people make and hang leaves every time they achieve a target and meet a difficult challenge. The tree takes pride of place in some young people's bedrooms and they see the tool as key to improving their behaviour.

The manager and staff fully support young people's rights. Young people have a clear understanding of their right to complain because they receive good information. Details about how to complain is included in the home's updated Statement of Purpose and young people's guide. Displays in the home give excellent information about support agencies and helplines. Young people are empowered and fully confident in contacting Ofsted to talk through their concerns.

Managers are excellent advocates for young people. This home makes a difference because managers work across different local authority agencies to promote young people's rights. These qualities have a positive impact on young people's behaviour and access to health and education services.

Young people are significantly safer as a result of living at this home. Safeguarding strategies have excellent impact because they respond to the significant vulnerability of and levels of risk presented by the young people living at this home. While some young people sometimes feel frustrated with the legal restrictions placed upon them, they fully acknowledge the quality support they receive from staff. This home makes a difference because young people do not go missing, take part in risk taking activities or re-offend since living at the home. They feel safe and have no concerns about bullying.

Clear and agreed safety protocols ensure all agencies are aware of the required actions to keep young people, staff and the public safe. Risk management is relevant and meaningful because young people are involved in the formulation and review of risk assessment material. Young people clearly understand what they need to achieve and change in order to show responsibility and earn trust. This working together motivates and encourages young people to improve behaviour so they can enjoy more independence and make safer choices.

The care planning framework covers all aspects of young people's needs. Placement planning dovetails risk management, health care, behaviour management and education. Staff fully embrace and understand the importance of partnership working. For example partnership working with the police, youth offending services and placing social workers lead to robust safeguarding strategies and positive outcomes for young people because they no longer offend. Staff also work closely with health care agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to meet the health care needs of young people.

Improvements in young people's health highlight the improved effectiveness of this home. Young people have greater understanding of how health issues such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) impact on their behaviour. Talking time with staff and researching child friendly information on the internet enable young people to have greater awareness and can therefore change their responses and triggers in behaviour.

Support of young people's emotional and mental health is central to the progress young people make. Close working partnerships with CAMHS and hospital consultants have resulted in a significant reduction of medication for some young people. This excellent outcome reflects the staff effective understanding of ADHD behaviours and their proactive approaches to managing behaviour. Young people say they feel much better and are not as sleepy since reducing high levels of medication.

Young people's emotional well-being improves as they grow in confidence and able to meet with and make friends with other young people. Young people now access group activities and particularly enjoyed dressing, meeting and dancing with other young people at their first school prom. Other young people enjoy a wide network of friends as a result of attending college.

Young people grow in emotional resilience because staff provide nurture and sensitive support to enable young people to understand family background and challenging circumstances with families and friends. Staff work in partnership with young people, their parents and social workers. They focus on creative ways to help young people unravel their emotions. Enabling young people to talk about and label feelings means they learn calmer ways to manage challenging situations and have safer family contact.

Young people value their relationships with staff and key working discussion with young people is effective. Young people are involved in writing and drawing in their daily records. At the end of each day they have quality time to reflect on the work they have done, their challenges and progress. Detailed care plans guide staff practice and young people's records gives an excellent insight into their looked after journey and experiences. There is excellent connection between care practice, targets, progress and local authority placement aims.

Young people's significant progress with behaviour positively impacts on engagement with learning. This home makes a difference because young people with poor histories of school attendance now enjoy education. Older young people say, 'I want to do more college next year; want to get my qualifications and get a job.' Staff comments such as, 'laps up learning; now goes part-time to school and they love him there,' exemplifies the positivity about young people's learning. Young people's sheer joy and 'high fiving' the manager on finding out they now have a new full-time school placement demonstrates the improved effectiveness of this home.

Young people develop good independence skills and learn to share with others as part of day-to-day group living. Some young people choose to take on additional responsibility, for example looking after the home's chickens. This sense of responsibility leads to higher self-esteem and greater emotional maturity. Older young people develop and mature as they are given increasing levels of trust outside of the home. Young people now travel independently to college, family contact and to meet their friends.

Leadership is strong; the experienced and qualified manager leads an experienced and cohesive team. Effective staffing arrangements promote the welfare and safety of young people. Staffing levels ensure robust implementation of risk management for young people with risky behaviours and challenges. Young people receive excellent staff support. They are able to enjoy a range of activities and have quality talking time as a result of the effective organisation of staffing levels and shift working.

Meeting all requirements from the previous inspection and routinely addressing recommendations from monthly independent monitoring visits demonstrates the manager's commitment to drive improvement.

For example care planning documentation now includes up to date and accurate placing authority care plans. There are formats and systems in place to record debriefs and young people's views. The high quality implementation of such improvements, particularly in young people's records about their looked after experience, demonstrate the improved effectiveness in the operation of this home.

Effectiveness improves because the management and staff team are strategic in implementing plans to improve the service. Targets are practical and outcome led for young people. Realistic timescales are set and effectively met. For example the staff team is now complete and training is underway as planned. New staff work supernumerary and supported with effective induction, regular supervision, core training and peer mentoring. Young people are currently discussing the holiday that they wished for and is included in the home's development plan. Re-decoration of the home is underway with at least half the home complete. Young people feel involved and consulted and they are very pleased with the colours and furnishings they have chosen for the home.

No statutory requirements or recommendations are set at this inspection. This gives testament to the manager and staff's team commitment to driving child-centred improvement, robust monitoring and ensuring young people reach their potential.

Information about this children's home

The home is a two-bedded children's home providing services for young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is owned and operated by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/11/2014	Full	adequate
25/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
15/10/2013	Full	good
28/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.