

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	22/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC020630
Type of inspection	Full
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 Whiting
Registered manager	Dale Berry
Inspector	Andrew Hewston

Inspection date	22/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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	Good

SC020630

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home is a good, caring environment where children develop and achieve. They increase in their awareness of their behaviours and family situations and respond well to work completed with a skilled and thoughtful staff team.
- Children enjoy a range of activities that challenge them and help them to develop an awareness of others.
- Children improve in their health, decreasing previously used medication and improving their emotional resilience through effective individualised work.
- Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding procedures and swiftly respond to concerns when they arise. Good systems ensure that all aspects of care are risk assessed.
- Children are positive about the home's rural environment and enjoy looking after chickens and growing food. They are proud of their home. Some maintenance of the home is insufficient and is affecting the internal décor.
- Highly individualised care planning and behaviour management systems help children to decrease poor behaviours. Some records relating to behaviour require additional detail.
- The home has a knowledgeable and determined manager who works well with a staff team that are enthusiastic about their role, their training and the level of support they receive.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard with particular reference to the necessary maintenance of the building, the responsible person must ensure; (2)(d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained.	31/10/2015
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 35 (3))	31/08/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings and as part of the home's plan for their care. This specifically relates to DVD ratings above their age and stage. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 31, paragraph 6.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a large private organisation. It offers care to two children primarily with emotional and behavioural difficulties within an age range from 8 to 18. It is set within a rural environment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/11/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
25/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
15/10/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The home provides a good placement for children to progress. One professional stated that the level of progression is: 'absolutely amazing considering what they have been through.' While another described the home as, 'just brilliant.' Children enjoy strong and positive relationships with the staff. All children have staff that they would talk to if they had any worries. Staff have an excellent awareness of children's likes and dislikes. Interactions between staff and children show a genuine sense of interest in each other. One independent reviewing officer said: 'it's lovely that relationships are so natural, they just know him.' Children enjoy a good range of recreational activities in the home and the local community, including regular swimming lessons, youth clubs and the cinema. A small number of age-inappropriate DVD's were within a young person's room during the inspection and have now been removed. Children enjoy looking after the chickens in the garden and growing vegetables. One young person stated that: 'it's great being out in the countryside, you get to see all sorts of wildlife, I saw an owl the other night, it's just brilliant.' Staff support children to become aware of others who face differing challenges, through the use of activities. A recent sponsored bike ride raised money and increased the child's knowledge about hospices. Contact between children and their families is organised from the point of their admission and continually assessed as the placement continues. Staff promote these links and help to develop children's positive views of their families. A social worker stated that the home were very supportive with ensuring that contact took place despite over 100 miles between the home and the child's family. Clear health plans ensure that children attend all necessary appointments and there are strong links with health professionals who also support their mental health. The management team has been able to significantly reduce the levels of medication that children have been receiving and have been diligent in challenging incorrect assessments. Consequently, children feel more awake and able to be involved in education. Daily work with children relating to their emotional resilience has meant that they are increasingly aware of their feelings and able to understand and articulate these to others. One young person said: 'this helps me from bottling things up and it makes me feel better.' Children progress in their education while being at the home. Both children attend	

school on a full-time basis and are doing well. This is significant improvement from when they came to the home, when they either were refusing to attend, or had been suspended. An end of year report included: 'he comes into school with a smile on his face and has made lots of friends.' Staff are enthusiastic about celebrating the children's educational achievements and certificates from schools are within children's memory boxes.

The manager gives careful consideration to the correct admissions to the home to ensure that the right 'mix' of children are together. This has resulted in children who generally get on with each other, enjoy joint activities, and help to develop an understanding of differing ways that children come into care.

Staff respond to children constantly, including within more formal forums such as house meetings and key work meetings, as well as everyday discussions. Key working meetings are well organised and are a time for children to have specified individualised and targeted support. Children enjoy these meetings and state that they learn about themselves and can talk about worries or plans for the future.

The home is comfortable and homely in a rural environment that children like and are proud of living in. Parts of the house require significant repair work including external brickwork, suffering from water egress and a poorly maintained extension lean-to. The condition of the brickwork is damaged by leaking external pipework and affects the lounge area ceiling. Some internal areas have not been well maintained, although there has been redecoration completed since the last full inspection. A leak from a bathroom has caused damage to the ceiling of the kitchen, wallpaper is starting to come away, and the doorframe within one of the children's bedroom has been damaged for over nine months. Major repair decisions are to be considered within discussions about the home's lease, however, some more minor repairs have not been completed sufficiently swiftly to give children a consistently pleasant home. Children enjoy personalising their rooms and are in the process of painting a large football emblem to develop children's sense of permanence in their room.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Effective safeguarding systems keep children safe. The staff team are well trained in responses to child protection concerns. Where safeguarding concerns occur, there is a strong chronology of the event and the subsequent actions. These show that robust and swift contact is made with safeguarding professionals and consideration is given to keeping the safety of the child at the centre of any	

investigation. Detailed risk assessments are in place, including expected staff responses where there are concerns about behaviours that may put children at risk. Additional training in safeguarding has been completed by the Registered Manager to further develop an awareness of systems to support children.

Policies and procedures are in place to respond to children that go missing. Such incidents are extremely rare, although when occur staff respond appropriately. Links are in place with independent bodies to complete discussions with children on their return relating to the reasons for their absence.

Where there are concerns regarding self-harming behaviours, the staff team have a high awareness of how to respond. This is developed through Staff consult about protective strategies when children arrive and are continually vigilant to keep them safe.

Children are aware of behaviour management systems that are used and can describe the reward structures that are in place. Targets for expected behaviours are regularly reviewed and individualised to reflect pertinent issues. Records of rewards are not consistently clear and include some gaps. Similarly some records of sanctions are insufficient, with a lack of end dates and no record of children being fully aware of the sanction. Levels of restraint in the home are low and staff are trained in using it as a last resort. All children have behaviour support plans to ensure that staff are aware of triggers for specific negative behaviours and how to de-escalate these. The home's records link well with incident reports, which, together, give a detailed and full account of the behaviour and how they have been responded to. This helps to support the well-being of both the child and the staff.

Full recruitment checks on all staff support the safety of young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is well managed and the staff team are enthusiastic about the care provided. The Registered Manager has been in post since 2014 and is qualified at Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. The senior team has a good awareness of the strengths within the staff team and a development plan is in place to further move the home forwards in the outcomes for children. Timelines regarding areas such as education and medication concerns over the past nine months show that the staff team are consistent in challenging	

other professionals to support the children's needs. A professional working with the staff also stated that: 'They have strong inter-agency working relationships with other agencies where they actually challenge the opinions and advice of other agencies in the best interest of the child. This is good.'

Monitoring of the home is completed both internally and through an external agency, offering a critical view of the working of the home. External reports are good and give a strong indication of the way that the home is working. The staff are responsive to the finding of these reports, showing a willingness to improve and develop. This is further enhanced by the home's development plan which is detailed with achievable outcomes.

The home's statement of purpose gives a good evaluation of the children they are able to work with, as well as those that they are not. The home works in line with this document. All children have detailed and highly individualised placement plans and each child has their own development plan to support how they have moved forwards. The home's planning documentation works in line with placing authority's plans. Reviews are regularly completed to examine and develop plans. Feedback from a good range of professionals working with the home is that communication from the home is regular, with staff having a high awareness of the children.

Children know how to make complaints and information is available, both from staff and within the children's welcome pack, about how to raise concerns. Complaints are fully recorded and responded to swiftly. Records show a clear picture of the actions taken following concerns being raised and children are involved with each step.

Staff are well supported by the management team. One said: 'You are able to talk about all sorts of things, how to work better with the children, as well as thinking about training that you have done.' Supervisions are regular and new staff receive additional mentoring support. A quarterly assessment of staff roles and abilities feeds into their annual appraisals; this ensures that staff are constantly thinking about their own practice and development. All staff complete an induction followed by mandatory courses, which are then regularly reviewed. All staff have either completed, or are in the process of completing, the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare.

The home has sufficient staff to meet the expectations of the statement of purpose. There are vacancies and this has significantly affected the hours that staff have had to work when staff members have been absent. Recruitment to these vacancies is in the process. The staff team worked well together to fill gaps and are positive about their role and the work that they are involved with. Staff meetings are regular and involve time to talk about the development of children, care practice, and planning for the future. They are also used as a time for training to further develop a consistent team approach to the way that they work with the children.

The registered manager is aware of the need to inform professionals involved with the children when significant events occur. He does this quickly and includes sufficient information to show the actions that the home has effectively responded to the concerns.

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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