

SC020630

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate up to six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private organisation.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 February 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be 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 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: 30 June 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Young people's plans do not contain enough information about contact arrangements.
- Staff do not ensure that young people attend all their routine health appointments in a timely way.
- Education arrangements do not fully support young people's learning.
- The staff do not have clear strategies to manage some of the young people's challenging behaviour, for example when they barricade doors.
- Staff rosters do not clearly show the hours that staff have worked.

The children's home's strengths:

- Young people have made some positive relationships with the staff in the short time that they have been at the home.
- Staff have a good awareness of young people's individual needs.
- Safeguarding concerns are dealt with quickly.
- Staff respond swiftly to concerns raised by young people.
- When young people go missing, staff respond well and this promotes their safety and welfare.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
16/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/07/2015	Full	Good
18/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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, 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 education standard is that children make measureable 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 non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(viii))	30/04/2018
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10(1)(a)(b))	30/04/2018
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11(1)(b)(2)(xi))	30/04/2018
The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child's parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(2)(d))	30/04/2018
Ensure that the registered manager maintains in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37(2)(a)) Specifically, a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked. (Schedule	30/04/2018

Inspection judgements

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

The home has been open for two months following a period of closure while the home was extended and completely redecorated. Young people new to the home have settled quickly and have developed some positive relationships with the staff. One young person stated, 'I get on with most of the staff really, it is early days but I'm sure we'll get along OK.'

Young people enjoy a good range of activities, with staff encouraging them to try out new clubs and experiences such as street dancing and going to the gym. This helps young people to develop new interests. Furthermore, engaging in leisure activities builds young people's confidence and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Staff help young people to stay in touch with their families. They arrange visits and make sure that young people's wishes are taken into account when deciding on where to go and what they would like to do when they see their families. However, young people's placement plans do not contain clear information about contact arrangements and records do not show up-to-date information about when contact has occurred. As a result, it is not clear if staff have fully complied with placing authorities' expectations relating to contact.

Some young people do not attend routine health appointments at the opticians and dentist. As a result, staff do not fully promote young people's physical health. Young people have access to counselling and attend sessions to help them to understand their behaviours and past experiences. Not all young people are positive about how well they engage with these, but told the inspector that they are getting used to them. Access to specialist support helps young people to improve their emotional well-being.

Young people are educated at the home, following the closure of one of the organisation's schools. They do not receive full-time education and staff are not suitably trained to support young people's learning. Records show that young people are not engaged in educational activities during the school day when the teacher is not at the home. The teacher said, 'Unfortunately, education isn't the priority in the home for the care staff.' These arrangements do not fully support all young people to make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential. However, one young person has gained from this situation, attending 'lessons' on a more regular basis than she has for over four years. She is now enthusiastic about her education and enjoys going out on trips.

The home has recently been redecorated throughout and is now a very pleasant homely environment. Young people are positive about the design of the home, especially the fact that all bedrooms are en suite. They are encouraged to personalise their rooms and have put up some of their own pictures to increase their sense of belonging.

Staff listen to and act on young people's views. Young people participate in regular key-work sessions with staff, during which they have meaningful discussions about aspects of their care. They also take part in house meetings and have their say about the day-to-day running of the home. Complaints are responded to swiftly, including the manager taking action when necessary and involving other professionals. As a result, young people feel valued and safe.

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

Good systems are in place to support young people's safety. When safeguarding issues arise, the staff know what to do and act effectively to protect the young people's welfare. This shows that they understand their role and responsibilities in keeping young people safe.

Staff have developed good links with the designated officer for safeguarding in the local authority where the home is situated. They share information well and act on the advice that is given to them. Good collaborative working relationships promote young people's safety and welfare. Safeguarding records include a clear chronology of what action staff have taken and who has been informed. The registered manager has responded appropriately to young people's concerns and this helps young people to feel listened to.

Appropriate procedures are in place so that staff can respond effectively when young people go missing from home. For example, staff have been diligent in their efforts to locate and safely return a young person, including travelling a considerable distance on three consecutive days and regular discussions with parents and the placing authority. The frequency of one young person's missing episodes has reduced considerably since coming to live at the home.

Staff assess risks relating to self-harming behaviour well. They have received training in this area, including first aid and ligature training. Consequently, staff are equipped to respond to incidents should they occur.

Staff promote positive behaviours through different reward structures and young people are aware of how they can achieve these rewards. One young person described how she had received some beauty treatments, due in part to her increased education attendance. Negative behaviours are responded to in line with the home's behaviour management procedures. Consequences link to the behaviours exhibited and help young people to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and other people. Staff only use physical intervention as a last resort when all other de-escalation techniques have been attempted. After an incident of restraint, managers speak to the staff and young people involved, to look at ways of preventing this from happening again. Behaviour management records are monitored by the home's manager in a timely manner to ensure that all strategies and sanctions used are fair and proportionate.

Young people have recently been able to 'barricade' themselves into rooms on two occasions. Although the manager has made some changes to the locking mechanisms on the doors, the ability of young people to move heavy furniture to stop staff access to rooms needs an additional response.

Recruitment practice is good throughout the organisation. All staff are subject to careful

vetting prior to starting work at the home. The manager places an emphasis on assessing staff's skills to ensure that they are well matched to the needs of the young people.

Regular checks are completed on issues relating to health and safety, including fire safety. This helps to further support the safety of young people and staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new manager is suitably experienced and is undertaking her level 5 qualification. She has applied to register with Ofsted. She is being supported well by the outgoing manager. They work well together and share information and ideas, which ensures that young people continue to receive a consistent approach to their care. The new manager has a good understanding of the strengths and needs of the home.

Monthly monitoring by the independent visitor includes discussions with young people and professionals to inform the visitor's assessment of the quality of care provided at the home. Actions raised by the visitor are responded to swiftly, showing the manager's commitment to improving the home.

Relationships between professionals and staff are generally positive. Social workers confirm that, if they raise concerns, these are investigated. A concern at the home is currently being examined. Managers and staff share information well with young people's social workers and keep them up to date with incidents in the home.

The staff work in line with the home's statement of purpose. They have a good awareness of the progress of the young people and work to improve young people's skills and self-esteem.

A good range of purposeful training opportunities is available to staff. The manager maintains some oversight of the team's training needs by checking completion rates. Mandatory training is up to date, and needs-led training is provided. Staff receive regular supervision, which includes reflective discussions about the young people and about young people's practice and development. Most staff have received an appraisal and those that have not are booked in.

The home is appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the young people currently living at the home and recruitment is ongoing. Staff rosters do not clearly show the hours that staff work. This is an area identified for improvement so that this information is readily available should it be needed in the future.

The manager takes appropriate action following significant events, including contacting all appropriate authorities and providing information about the event and the home's response. This shows that the manager has a good awareness of ongoing issues in the home and the steps she is taking to prevent reoccurrence.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young

people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC020630

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Shelley Whiting

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Andrew Hewston, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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