

SC030367

Registered provider: Cotswold Chine School

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This independent charitable school is also registered as a children's home. It provides care for up to 42 children. The accommodation for children is provided across seven houses located at or near to the school. At the time of the inspection, 34 children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 15 May 2023.

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2024	Full	Good
29/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/11/2021	Full	Good
21/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All homes where children live were visited as part of this inspection.

Children are generally making good progress due to the care and support they receive from staff. Since the previous inspection, support has been strengthened for children in developing their life skills and working towards independence. Some children have made excellent progress and have had well-supported and planned moves from the home. For example, one child has been supported to attend university. Another child has attained qualifications and moved into supported accommodation.

Before children move to this home, leaders and managers carefully consider if staff can meet their individual needs. When children move on in an unplanned way, reflection and learning take place. For example, managers have recently identified a need for greater scrutiny when children move to live here from another provision in the same trust.

The therapy and family support services on offer are impressive and sometimes innovative. They provide valuable support for children and families. This includes improving relationships between children and parents, improving children's mental well-being and helping children to understand their journey and explore their identity.

Feedback from professionals and parents is varied. Some parents and professionals are exceptionally happy with the support and care provided to their children. Other parents and professionals raised concerns about communication and the consistency of care given to their children in the homes.

Children are provided with regular opportunities to share their views and wishes about the care they receive. They are supported to discuss their concerns and make complaints when they are not happy about something. After a child has made a complaint, a senior member of staff meets with the child to ensure that they understand the issue. Senior leaders work with the child to agree the steps that need to be taken to resolve the complaint.

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

Children develop strong and trusting relationships with some staff. Children said that they feel able to speak to staff about their worries and that staff try to help them resolve these. However, children also said they feel less able to speak to newer members of staff as relationships with these individuals are still developing.

Staff know how to support children effectively. They recognise when children may struggle, and strategies are used effectively to support them and prevent an escalation of behaviours. However, records do not always provide up-to-date information about children's current risks and needs.

Children rarely go missing from home. When they do, staff take appropriate action, including searching for them and reporting them missing to the police. When children return home, staff speak to them about what happened and what could be done differently in the future.

When restraint is used, this is in appropriate circumstances and to prevent serious harm. Children are helped to understand what happened and why, and staff seek to repair relationships afterwards.

After incidents take place, managers support staff to speak about the event and their actions. However, these discussions are not always reflective and do not identify learning, issues relating to staff practice, or training and development needs effectively.

Children are encouraged and supported to develop healthy friendships with peers. Some children said they do not always get on well with the other children they live with and the behaviour of other children can affect them. Support that staff give to children who witness incidents or who are involved in conflict with their peers is not always documented clearly.

Significant safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately with relevant procedures and processes followed. Leaders and managers work with external safeguarding partners and take appropriate action to ensure that children are safe. However, there are some weaknesses in record-keeping processes. As a result, not all safeguarding concerns raised by staff are recorded, which affects oversight, monitoring and learning.

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

Since the previous inspection, several members of staff have left the organisation. This has resulted in gaps in leadership in some homes with senior staff stepping in to cover management roles in the homes.

Leaders and managers have taken some action to address recruitment challenges and ensure that suitable staff are employed. Shift patterns have been reviewed to provide a better work-life balance for staff. This has resulted in more successful recruitment campaigns.

Leaders and managers use monitoring systems to help them follow and understand children's progress and experiences. For example, a detailed monthly analysis is carried out to identify patterns and trends in the use of restraint. This is then used to provide targeted support with the aim of reducing the frequency of physical interventions. However, records of restraint do not always include the durations and times of individual holds. Multiple holds are sometimes recorded in individual restraint records, which means that the overall number of reported restraints is likely to be inaccurate.

Staff generally enjoy working at this home and are very positive about the support and visibility of managers. New members of staff said that they feel well supported by colleagues and managers and feel able to ask questions about their role if needed.

Leaders and managers are committed in their aim to continue to improve the quality of care provided to children. They have a good understanding of the staff team's strengths and areas for development and a plan is in place to upskill and develop the workforce. Staff joining the organisation receive a robust induction, and a range of training opportunities are offered to staff. Specialist training has been provided for some staff, and several other staff are working towards professional qualifications, such as social work degrees.

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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that monitoring systems provide sufficient oversight of day-to-day staff practice.	17 April 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that consideration is given to the support children receive when they witness incidents and that this is recorded accurately. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff support children to develop positive relationships with each other. Staff should have the appropriate skills and understanding to address conflict between children effectively. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)

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: SC030367

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Cotswold Chine School

Responsible individual: Jason Lukas

Registered manager: Valerie Gisselle Gomez Iraheta

Inspectors

Janet Jauregui, Social Care Inspector

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector

Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector

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