

SC030367

Registered provider: Cotswold Chine School

Assurance 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 who have experienced social and emotional difficulties. The accommodation for children is provided across 7 houses that are located at or near the school. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this site.

At the time of this inspection, 34 children were living at the home. Inspectors spent time with the children during their lunchtime and after school.

There are 2 registered managers. One manager registered with Ofsted in May 2023 and is having some planned time off work. The second manager registered in May 2025.

Inspection date: 24 March 2026

Date of last inspection: 25 November 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Leaders and managers have taken action to address the requirements that were raised at the last inspection. Some of the actions are ongoing and/or are in their infancy so cannot yet be fully tested for efficacy.

Leaders and managers are exploring how to strengthen their oversight of the care that is provided to children to ensure that it is of good quality and that staff feel supported in their roles. Leaders and managers have identified their strengths and areas for development, and they are trialling a new approach to children's care and management in one home. Leaders' and managers' initial assessments of this trial are positive.

Staff's interactions with children are empathetic, supportive and respectful, while promoting safe boundaries and structure. Children are happy and comfortable in their home. Children are regularly asked for their views and wishes about their care, and staff are genuinely interested in children's experiences. As a result, children feel able to express themselves, are listened to and develop a positive sense of togetherness.

Children are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities, both at the home and in the community. Staff ask children about their interests, which has resulted in a greater variety of activities being accessed. As a result, children have more opportunities to spend positive time with their friends and pursue their hobbies. Leaders and managers recognise that unstructured time can be difficult for some children. Consequently, they proactively plan to increase structure when needed and ensure that children's experiences are positive and purposeful.

Children are helped to understand the risks associated with going missing from home. Staff support children to carefully reflect on the reasons for them leaving the home without staff awareness or permission, which allows staff to work collaboratively with children to identify and reduce the push-and-pull factors that influence children's decision-making. This promotes safety, reduces the likelihood of incidents and helps children to feel listened to.

Although missing-from-home incidents are reported to have reduced, this reduction is not well understood. Leaders and managers state that there have been 2 incidents in which children left the home during the night and were reported missing from home. However, there have been other occasions when children have left the home without staff permission, and these were not treated or reported as missing-from-home episodes. While there is a rationale for these decisions, these incidents are not included in analysis. As a result, leaders and managers do not have a clear overview of patterns, risks or emerging concerns relating to children going missing from home.

When concerns about children's safety are identified, staff take immediate action to help children to stay safe. However, leaders and managers do not always take robust and proactive action to explore and understand the concerns fully. As a result, some opportunities to mitigate risk and prevent similar concerns in the future are missed. In addition, children are not always helped to understand the actions that staff take to protect them from harm.

Staff say that they are provided with a range of training and learning opportunities to help them to meet children's needs and keep them safe. The introduction of regular reflective sessions supports staff to identify children's emerging needs and adjust the care that they provide to ensure that it is effective. These sessions include consultation with the provider's therapy team, which allows for further insights and guidance to be shared with staff. As a result, staff are better equipped to meet children's needs.

Staff are supported to reflect on their responses when they find children's behaviours challenging. Leaders and managers use these reflective discussions to help staff identify what went well and what could be done differently. Learning from these reviews is shared with the wider staff team so that children's care and support can be planned more effectively and practice continues to develop.

Although staffing levels are in line with the home's policy, there are occasions when staff do not feel that sufficient support is available to children. When additional support is requested, responses from managers are sometimes delayed, leaving staff feeling vulnerable and challenges to escalate. Leaders and managers report that staffing levels have improved since the last inspection. However, this continues to be an area of concern among staff.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/11/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/01/2025	Full	Good
24/01/2024	Full	Good
29/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; and that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(b)(e)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that leaders, managers and staff robustly explore children's experiences when they may have been harmed or placed in unsafe situations. Staff must be professionally curious and help children to identify, understand and respond safely to risk. Leaders, managers and staff must assess risk and take effective action to reduce it. This includes identifying learning	5 June 2026

to inform future practice and sharing concerns about children's safety with the relevant professionals. In addition, when children raise concerns about their safety, they must be provided with an overview of the actions that have been taken to protect them.	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; and ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(b)(d))	5 June 2026

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC030367

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Responsible individual: Jason Lukas

Registered manager: Valerie Gisselle Gomez Iraheta
Timothy Makaruk

Inspectors

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector
Emma Fryer, Social Care Inspector
Karen Hallam, Social Care Inspector
Darren Wickens, Social Care Inspector

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