

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 who have experienced social and emotional difficulties. The accommodation for children is provided across eight 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, 35 children were living at the home. Inspectors spent time with the children during their lunchtime and in the evenings.

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

Inspection dates: 25 and 27 November 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: 21 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2025	Full	Good
24/01/2024	Full	Good
29/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

All homes where children live were visited during this inspection.

Children's progress and experiences are mixed. While some children are making good progress, other children's progress has stalled. Children's varied experiences are reflected in their feedback about what it is like to live at their home. Some children feel listened to, whereas others say that there are 'too many rules' and limited opportunities to spend time with their friends. Some children say that they feel safe, but others do not due to insufficient support from staff.

When staff spend time with children, their interactions are warm, friendly and kind. Children are supported to talk about the things that matter to them. However, when children make requests or raise concerns, they are not consistently shared with the relevant people in a timely way. As a result, children are not always kept informed about what is happening, and responses and resolutions are delayed.

Children are supported to engage positively in their learning and achieve in education. They are provided with opportunities to gain a range of qualifications and skills that are tailored to their age and ability. Children are also encouraged to consider their future career aspirations, and opportunities to participate in work experience placements are promoted.

Children are provided with access to child-focused services, including therapy, life-story work and activities that help them to build positive routines and a sense of stability. Flexible, personalised support helps children to understand their family relationships, experiences and identity.

The quality of the environments across the homes varies. Children are supported to personalise their bedrooms, which helps them to develop a sense of belonging. However, in some homes, institutionalised features and restrictive practices, such as sofa cushions and children's games being locked away, detract from the homely environment. Repairs and refurbishments are not always completed in a timely manner or to a good standard.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Although staff know the children well, they do not always have the skills to reduce risk and help children to stay safe effectively. While some children are more able to express themselves and make safer choices, staff's support for other children has been less effective and impactful.

As the support that is offered to children is not always effective, the risk that they are exposed to can escalate and affect other children by redirecting staff's attention. When staff provide additional support to individual children, others temporarily lose the support that they were receiving. As a result, children's relationships with each other and staff become fractured.

When children go missing from home, staff do not always follow the agreed procedures due to gaps in staff's understanding and insufficient staffing levels. There is a pattern of children going missing from home, particularly at night and without staff being aware. Although leaders and managers have identified this pattern, they have not taken robust action to prevent missing-from-home episodes. Leaders, managers and staff have not thoroughly considered the reasons for children going missing from home and have not made effective arrangements to reduce the push-and-pull factors.

When children raise concerns about their safety, swift action is taken to ensure that they receive the support they need. There is a strong multi-agency response, which involves children's family members, carers and social workers. However, the learning from incidents and concerns identified by leaders and managers is not consistently shared with the wider staff team. This limits staff's ability to proactively improve their practice to help children stay safe.

There is an ongoing, serious child protection allegation that is being investigated by external agencies. Although Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, inspectors have requested updates to determine whether regulatory action is required. The immediate responses from leaders and managers have been appropriate, and they are working collaboratively with the multi-agency team. However, leaders and managers have not always shared relevant information with the team swiftly.

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

Children, their family members and staff consistently report that there are not always enough staff available to provide good-quality, consistent care to children. Although leaders and managers explain that staffing levels are sufficient, the variable skills and experiences of staff mean that children's needs are not always met effectively.

The support that staff receive from leaders and managers is inconsistent. Management structures are complex, with responsibilities divided between several people. Consequently, the support provided to staff is disjointed, which impacts the quality of care that children receive.

Team meetings are not always helpful for staff. Opportunities to coordinate the care that is provided by staff across different homes are underdeveloped and ineffective. Staff are not always given sufficient opportunities to discuss and plan children's care as a team. As a result, staff struggle to align their working practices, which leads to inconsistent care of children.

Staff retention is an ongoing challenge, which further impacts stability for children. Leaders and managers are reviewing the processes for inducting new staff into the home. Although induction processes are comprehensive, some staff report that it can be overwhelming and does not equip them with the skills and knowledge that they require. Leaders and managers are reviewing the induction process and providing increased opportunities for staff reflection. Leaders and managers hope that this will help staff to feel more confident and supported in their role, reducing staff turnover and promoting continuity for children.

The registered manager is committed to improving the quality of care that is provided to children. Detailed staff development and performance plans have been implemented. While these improvements are necessary, they are not always welcomed by staff.

As some of the changes that have been made by leaders and managers are in their infancy, they cannot yet be tested for efficacy.

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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff explore and understand the reasons that children go missing from home. Staff must provide care that mitigates these push-and-pull factors to reduce missing-from-home episodes.	27 February 2026
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— ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;	27 February 2026

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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)(b)(c)(e)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must review and identify learning from incidents that occur. This learning must be shared with staff effectively. In addition, staff must be provided with opportunities to plan for and reflect on the care that they provide to ensure that children receive good-quality, consistent care that helps them to stay safe effectively. In addition, the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills and experience necessary to meet children's needs and help them to stay safe effectively. There must always be a sufficient number of staff members available to promote predictability and continuity of care for children. Staff must be supported to work as a team.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;	27 February 2026

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; and help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff support children to express their thoughts and feelings in ways that prevent an escalation in risk. Staff must support children to understand the impact of their behaviours on others and take effective steps to mitigate this.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; and provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)(vii)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff listen to children and provide them with safe and age-appropriate opportunities to spend time with their friends. In addition, the registered person must ensure that repairs and refurbishments to the home are completed swiftly and to a good standard. This includes children’s bedrooms. The registered person must seek to reduce the restrictions that are used in the home to promote a family-like environment for children.	27 February 2026

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
Timothy Makaruk

Inspectors

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector
Karen Hallam, Social Care Inspector
Clare Nixson, Regulatory Inspection Manager

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2025