

SC063895

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional needs.

At the time of the inspection, there were two children living at the home. One child was spoken to during the inspection.

The manager has been registered since 2023.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 12 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
11/01/2022	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children live in a warm and welcoming environment. Children's bedrooms are thoughtfully personalised to reflect their unique style, allowing their personalities to shine through. This creates a space where children feel truly comfortable and valued. One child, who has recently moved from the home, left a heartfelt letter for a new arrival, sharing, 'This is one of the best care homes you could ask for.' A family member for one child shared that staff 'are just fantastic'.

Staff provide children with the opportunity to spend safe and meaningful time with those who are important to them. This enables children to build and maintain relationships with those who are close to them. The development and maintenance of these relationships help nurture children's sense of identity and belonging.

Staff have successfully built strong and trusting relationships with children, creating an environment where children feel safe. Children actively seek out staff and enjoy spending time with them. These positive relationships enable children to develop important skills and strategies to manage difficult feelings. For one child, this had led to significant progress in opening up to staff about their emotional well-being.

Children are celebrated with genuine enthusiasm and pride. Each child has a journal that staff will write thoughtful comments in daily. Additionally, the creation of a memory book provides a keepsake that children can take when they leave the home. This captures the milestones and special moments of children's journey in the home. This supports children to grow in confidence and self-esteem, which enables them to make continued excellent progress.

Children have made excellent progress with education. Learning is highly valued and encouraged by staff, which supports children to do well with education. The manager plays a crucial role in advocating for children, ensuring local authority education plans are in the best interest. One child is regularly attending school, making good achievement in their education. Another child, who previously faced challenges with their education, has made remarkable progress by actively engaging in services to support their development.

Children are generally in good health. For one child, there are ongoing concerns about their physical well-being. Staff are proactive in addressing these concerns by consistently encouraging open conversations with the child about the importance of maintaining good health. There is comprehensive multi-agency working, including healthcare professionals to create a tailored support package for this child. As a result, there has been slight improvement in the child's physical health.

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

Risk assessments are comprehensive and detailed. These provide clear guidance on specific actions staff must take to ensure the safety and well-being of each child. They are regularly reviewed and updated following incidents of concern, ensuring that they remain relevant and reflect children's evolving needs. These are thoughtfully written in the child's voice. As a result, when incidents of concern arise, staff are well equipped to respond appropriately.

When children go missing, a well-coordinated response is always implemented. Staff immediately begin searching key areas to locate the child, and police are contacted if necessary to ensure their safety. Return interviews, facilitated by the local authority, are offered to the child to better understand their experience and the reasons behind their absence. Additionally, staff engage in meaningful discussions with the child following any missing-from-care episodes. For one child, this proactive and responsive approach has led to a significant reduction in episodes of children going missing from care.

Staff carefully and sensitively manage incidents of self-harm. Staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide effective support, ensuring children receive the care they need. Staff support children to develop self-soothing techniques, which empower them to manage their own emotions. As a result, children feel comfortable to open up about their emotional well-being.

Staff engage in regular and nurturing conversations with children, where they feel comfortable discussing a range of topics. Sensitive subjects are approached with care and consideration, meaning children can engage without feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable. Staff are creative in finding ways to engage children in difficult conversations.

When allegations are made against staff, they are handled appropriately to ensure the immediate safety and well-being of children. All appropriate agencies are informed and in-depth investigations are conducted. When areas of learning are identified by the manager, the knowledge is shared with the wider team, when appropriate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by a dedicated and ambitious manager, who demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring the highest standards of care. The manager has thorough oversight of the home, continuously seeking out ways to enhance both the environment and staff practice. Staff and the manager's practice is always centred around the children's best interest. This creates an environment where children continue to make exceptional progress in all areas of their development.

There is a stable and consistent staff team in place, which provides the foundation for continued high-quality care of the children in the home. The manager fosters a culture of continuous learning and development of staff. In addition to mandatory training, staff have access to specialised training tailored to the individual needs of the children.

Staff are provided with ample space to reflect on their practice through regular supervision and team meetings, ensuring that ongoing professional development is supported. Research-informed practice is a key foundation of these meetings, with thorough and thoughtful reflections that help staff to continuously improve their care for the children. However, supervision for the manager has been inconsistent due to recent changes within the organisation. A new responsible individual has been appointed and has acknowledged these shortfalls, taking immediate steps to address the issue.

Staff consistently deliver an exceptional quality of care to the children. Staff place the children's best interests at the heart of their practice. This dedication creates a supportive environment where children feel valued, safe and able to thrive.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. These should be recorded and shared with all staff, including the manager ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC063895

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Barton Close, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicester LE19 1SJ

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Amber Miles

Inspector

Jess Baines, Social Care Inspector

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