

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 and/or learning disabilities.

At the time of the inspection, no children were living at the home. However, five children have lived at the home since the last inspection, and their experiences were considered at this inspection.

There has been no registered manager since April 2025.

Inspection dates: 30 September and 1 October 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be 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: 4 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2025	Full	Outstanding
12/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
11/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children live in a well-presented, welcoming home that provides a warm and comfortable environment. The home is maintained to a good standard and is thoughtfully furnished, helping children to feel valued and at ease. There is ample space throughout the home, allowing children to spend time together socially or to have privacy and quiet time alone when needed.

Children experience planned and carefully managed moves into the home. When children leave the home, they are supported effectively, ensuring continuity and emotional security. One family member expressed their appreciation for the care and support provided by staff during their child's time at the home.

Children enjoy good health, with their physical and emotional well-being well supported. Staff are attentive to children's individual health needs and promote healthy routines. The manager advocates effectively on behalf of children, seeking timely support from external health and specialist services when required, to ensure children receive the right help.

Children are supported to maintain meaningful relationships with the people who are important to them, including family members. Staff actively promote and facilitate these relationships in line with care plans, recognising the emotional significance of these relationships. As a result, children are helped to sustain their identity and feel connected to their family networks.

When children's meetings take place, children engage well and benefit from the opportunity to express their views. However, these opportunities are not provided consistently for all children, which limits their ability to regularly express their wishes and feelings. At times, conversations with children about their behaviour are overly focused on what has gone wrong, rather than being used as opportunities to explore underlying needs or feelings. As a result, children are blamed for their behaviour.

Consequences imposed for children's behaviour are not always proportionate and, at times, appear punitive rather than restorative. Records do not consistently detail the length of the consequence or include clear timescales for review.

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

When children go missing from the home, staff respond quickly by searching the local area to locate them. Although the police are contacted, this is not always in accordance with the children's missing-from-care protocols. Children are given opportunities to talk with staff about their experiences. Return interviews are carried out by the local

authority, providing children with an independent person to talk to, should they wish, about their reasons for going missing.

When incidents of concern occur, staff use de-escalation techniques to support children, and they take appropriate action to manage the situation. However, staffing ratios have not consistently been maintained in accordance with children's care plans. At times, this has placed children at potential risk of harm.

Risk assessments are detailed, reviewed and updated regularly, especially following incidents of concern. They outline clear actions staff must take to reduce potential harm to children. However, these measures are not consistently implemented in practice, which has compromised children's safety. Children are not always adequately supported to develop the skills and awareness needed to keep themselves safe. This is an area for improvement.

Managers and leaders demonstrate a strong understanding of the importance of safer recruitment practices, ensuring that only suitable individuals, who are appropriately vetted and qualified, are employed to work with children in the home.

When children raise concerns about staff, investigations are carried out. However, not all the staff who may have been present during the incidents are always spoken to. Additionally, there are often delays in notifying the local authority when concerns are raised. While managers provide thorough oversight of these incidents and identify areas for improvement, the learning is not shared with the wider team to inform practice.

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

The home has been without a registered manager since April 2025. Although a manager was in post during this period, they have since left and no longer work at the home. Staff report that they feel unsupported by leaders, which has had a negative impact on team morale. However, the deputy manager has been a consistent and valued source of support, and staff have spoken positively about their role during this unsettled time. Senior leaders have also increased their oversight, including visits to the home, which staff describe as beneficial.

Team meetings take place regularly and provide staff with valuable opportunities to come together, share information and reflect on their work with the children. These meetings include detailed discussions about the needs and progress of the children living in the home. Recent sessions have included input from a psychotherapist. This has supported staff to reflect on their care practice and experiences over recent months, contributing to improved team understanding and emotional resilience.

Staff are up to date with their mandatory training. This includes safeguarding. However, they have not received specific training to help them meet the individual and cultural needs of some children. As a result, staff report lacking the confidence and knowledge

required to respond appropriately to the children's specific needs and identities. This gap in training has limited the team's ability to meet children's diverse needs effectively.

Not all staff have received supervision in line with the home's policy. As a result, some staff have not had regular opportunities to reflect on their practice, discuss their professional development, or receive consistent support. However, where supervision has taken place, records show that it included detailed discussions about the children and their care needs.

Leaders understand the shortfalls and have developed plans to address them. Some improvements have already been implemented, demonstrating a proactive approach to driving forward positive change.

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that staffing ratios are followed in line with children's risk assessments. The registered person should inform the team around the child without delay when there have been safeguarding concerns for children. The registered person should support children to understand how to keep themselves safe.	1 December 2025

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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that when learning has been identified from allegations and incidents, these are addressed with the team. The registered person should ensure investigations into allegations include all staff who were present during the incident. The registered person should ensure that staff have the appropriate skills to meet the specific needs of children they are caring for.	1 December 2025
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28;	29 December 2025

or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b))	
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; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child’s age and understanding, personal, sexual	29 December 2025

and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)) In particular, the registered person should create a supportive environment where children feel safe to discuss their behaviour and understand its impact. The registered person must ensure that any sanctions are fair, proportionate, and focused on helping children learn and grow.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	1 December 2025

In particular, the registered person should ensure that all staff receive supervision in line with the home's policy.	
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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: Paula Welsh

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jess Baines, 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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