

SC379357

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to four children who may have experienced trauma that has left them vulnerable.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

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

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/11/2022	Full	Good
15/11/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home. Since the last inspection, three children have moved into the home, and one child has moved out.

Staff have built trusting relationships with the children and know them well. One child said that the staff are great; they listen to her, and she feels able to talk openly with them. Children feel listened to and understood by the staff, who genuinely care about them.

Children are encouraged and supported to spend time with their family and friends. This helps children to maintain and improve the quality of their relationships with the people who are important to them.

Staff encourage children to take part in a variety of activities. One child enjoys ice-skating. Another child enjoys making music at a studio. Children go on day trips. Two of the children have been on a holiday to Wales, and another child went to a summer camp. One child enjoyed a camping trip. Children have opportunities to pursue hobbies and experience enriching activities.

Staff have regular one-to-one and group discussions with children about important topics. Children talk to the staff with ease about their identity, health and consent. These discussions have helped children know how to understand themselves, how to keep themselves safe and the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.

Staff are good role models, and this has helped children to gain impressive independence skills. One child is managing a weekly food budget and essential items. She has had a successful part-time seasonal job. Children cook a range of simple meals. Staff have helped children to use public transport. Staff have ensured that children have a good knowledge of their rights, entitlements and how to access a range of community services. Building these practical life skills helps to ensure that children are very well equipped for adulthood.

The home is welcoming and spacious. Children and staff spend time in the large kitchen, where they chat and make drinks together, giving the home a family feel. The home is well decorated with a good-sized garden. Children's bedrooms are personalised and well decorated.

Three of the children have education provisions. One child was working towards online courses linked to building independence skills. The manager recognises when provisions cannot meet children's needs and finds appropriate alternatives. One child moved schools in September 2023, as his needs could no longer be met. He had been studying a GCSE syllabus for two years that was different to the school he moved to. The manager did not communicate the change, which meant that the child had to learn new literature. At the time of the inspection, the manager was

taking appropriate action to ensure the child can sit his exams using familiar literature. However, this delay could impact the outcome of the child's grades.

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

The manager and staff have taken appropriate actions to help keep children safe. Despite every effort being made to keep children safe, situations beyond staff's control have meant that, at times, children have been exposed to risky situations. A social worker has commented on how well safeguarding incidents are managed. The staff are confident and well equipped to manage safeguarding incidents.

The manager shares risk assessments with all relevant professionals so that children who are at risk of exploitation are safeguarded. Regularly reviewing the risks that children are exposed to and agreeing protocols through joined-up working enable a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children.

There have been some incidents of children going missing from the home. The manager has worked closely with the police to share intelligence about safeguarding concerns in the local area. The staff manage incidents well, and the children are offered independent return interviews.

Staff have not used physical interventions. One child uses a punch bag to redirect difficult emotions. Staff understand the reasons for children's behavioural responses and help children to express themselves more safely.

During the inspection, there was a serious bullying incident at the home. The manager takes bullying incidents seriously, and bullying is not tolerated. The child is being appropriately supported.

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

The manager is registered, experienced and holds a relevant level 5 qualification. The children benefit from a committed and stable team of staff who feel well supported by the manager. However, there has been a significant increase in incidents and a decline in the effectiveness of leadership and management.

The staff do not all have regular supervision sessions or annual appraisals. Following staff practice concerns, the manager planned to increase the frequency of supervision. This increase was part of the action plan that was not realised. The member of staff had a further practice concern. At times, the staff do not have regular opportunities to develop and improve their practice.

On some occasions, the manager's oversight of incidents and children's consequences has been delayed or has not taken place. This means that opportunities to improve staff practice could be lost, and patterns and trends that may have helped reduce incidents are lost.

Children's moves into the home are well planned and include children's views. One child moved on in an unplanned way; this was due to legalities that were out of the manager's control. The manager works closely with the local authority. She has given notice for one child and is considering whether another child should remain at the home. The manager recognised that she could no longer safely meet the needs of these children for reasons beyond her control.

The independent person's reports are of good quality and make appropriate recommendations. These reports help the manager to make improvements to the quality of care that children receive.

Staff benefit from good-quality face-to-face training. The staff and manager benefit from bespoke training to help them understand children's trauma. Staff have a good knowledge of how to meet the children's needs and are motivated to provide good care. Most staff hold a relevant diploma or are working towards this within agreed timescales.

The manager has met one of the two requirements that were raised at the last full inspection. This related to the management of allegations. One requirement is restated in respect of supervision for staff.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii))	14 March 2024
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, ensure that incidents and consequences are monitored and reviewed.	14 March 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	14 May 2024

In particular, ensure that practice-related supervision and appraisals are completed with staff in line with the homes supervision policy.

This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.

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: SC379357

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Limited

Registered provider address: The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey
GU21 6HT

Responsible individual: Michelle Batchelor

Registered manager: Roslyn Greyling

Inspector

Amy Miles, Social Care inspector

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