

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 owned home is registered to provide care for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2016.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 26 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 November 2021

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 19 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/11/2019	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2018	Full	Good
12/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff provide high levels of individualised, nurturing care that is sensitive to the children's complex needs and vulnerabilities. This has enabled the children to make good progress from their starting points.

Children are supported by staff to attend health appointments and to receive the specialist help that they need. For example, staff were able to promptly identify an emerging health condition for one child and take immediate effective action. Working closely with health professionals, staff supported the child to understand her condition and use electronic technology to share and monitor this with health professionals. Consequently, the child's levels of medication are accurate, and she is supported to manage her health well.

The staff understand the value of working closely with children's families. They regularly travel with the children and plan creative activities that children can enjoy with their families. In doing so, the manager takes a flexible approach. For one child, staff provided additional respite care and emotional support for all the family during challenging times. Such actions ensure that children maintain these important relationships and their sense of identity.

The children enjoy undertaking a range of activities together and being active members of the household. The staff encourage high levels of participation through house meetings, daily activities and household tasks, using individual weekly incentive charts. The children's achievements are captured in memory books containing photographs and memorabilia. This creates a sense of inclusion for the children that promotes their self-esteem and confidence.

Not all the children have access to full-time education provision. The staff and the manager have worked hard in exploring education options, providing informal education opportunities and buying resources to support the children's learning. However, the manager has failed to escalate the lack of provision promptly. This has meant drift and delay for some children, which with more advocacy may have been avoided.

The staff are motivated and keen to develop children's independence and life skills. They undertake various activities such as cooking and creating booklets on money management and healthy lifestyles. However, this work is not based on a pathway plan or complete assessment. There are no set targets that are measurable. As a result, staff and records lack clarity on children's skills and knowledge. This means that staff and managers are not able to fully prepare children for and advise them on critical planning decisions concerning independence.

The home is clean and light with a warm and welcoming feel. There is ample space for the children to study, relax and play. The children benefit from good outside space. However, a broken fence detracts from an otherwise well-maintained garden.

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

Staff are skilled and experienced in building trusted relationships with the children. The staff create a culture of openness that encourages children to speak with staff if they have any worries. This means that physical interventions are rarely used, and the staff have been able to reduce the children's risk-taking behaviours. One child, who was going missing frequently when she arrived at the home, no longer goes missing from the home. She said that this is because she feels safe and secure in the staff's care.

Staff use a variety of individual and group-based activities to explore with the children how they can keep themselves safe. An example is the regular 'bully buster' sessions, during which staff explore recent incidents with children and reflect on how they can be positively managed. In addition, staff have devised tailored programmes that are used with children in one-to-one sessions to address specific topics, such as use of social media and healthy relationships.

The manager is comprehensive in her oversight of incidents. When a child made repeated allegations against staff, the manager ensured that safeguarding procedures were thoroughly followed, including referrals to, and seeking advice from, the designated officer. The manager notifies social workers of concerns and professionals' meetings are held. The child involved is regularly encouraged to give their view in debrief sessions.

The children's risk assessments are up to date and individualised. The staff record overviews of the children's needs and specific strategies to protect them from harm. However, some of the details do not clearly express how to implement all the identified risk-reduction strategies. In addition, not all staff have had specialist training in one child's specific needs. This means that staff could miss important information on how best to manage presenting behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2016 and previously worked in different roles within the organisation, building a range of experience. She has established secure and stable leadership and put appropriate management systems in place.

The manager actively seeks independent scrutiny of the home. She makes best use of information from internal monitoring, such as regularly seeking the children's views. She uses external monitoring from the independent person to ensure continuous improvement.

The staff enjoy working at the home. They said that they feel supported by the manager and recognise the positive and relaxed atmosphere that she creates. This

has led to the staff working well together and wanting to support each other. Consequently, the staff demonstrate good modelling of behaviours to the children.

The manager ensures that tolerance and diversity are regularly promoted. The staff actively address discriminatory behaviours as they arise with the children. The staff use conversations at the dinner table and during house meetings to explore different cultures and current issues affecting society. This helps children to broaden their knowledge and understanding of different cultures and lifestyles.

The recording of information is variable. Some of the records are handwritten in note format, which makes them difficult to read and understand. Furthermore, staff do not always link work with children and records together. This makes it difficult for the child to understand their files and the manager to keep a track of what actions have been taken.

The feedback from parents and professionals about the home is positive. They recognise the staff's commitment to creating a nurturing home and the staff's efforts to overcome some of the challenges in accessing timely education and therapeutic provision. The manager and the responsible individual recognise these difficulties and are working on a long-term plan to develop the home.

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, 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if they consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)) In particular, obtain children's pathway plans and ensure that these plans are reflected in the children's placement plans; and formally escalate concerns, within the placing authority, in relation to children's rights to education provision.	7 February 2022
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; 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff—	7 February 2022

help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult.

(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(vi))

Specifically, ensure that staff have a clear understanding of the differences in assessing, planning and developing children's independence skills; and

ensure that key-work sessions relating to independence skills are based on an independence plan that sets clear measurable targets.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a well-maintained environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, repair the rear side garden fence. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that, when there are safeguarding concerns for a child, the placement plan agreed between the home and the placing authority includes details of the steps that the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. Specifically, the registered person should ensure that all the identified risks have clear corresponding strategies and risk-reduction actions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs in areas such as understanding attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and avoidance disorder and more in-depth autism spectrum disorder training. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Victoria Wallace

Registered manager: Michelle Batchelor

Inspector

Leemya McKeown, Social Care Inspector

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