

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC379357
Inspector	Louisa Bayley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Castle Homes Care Limited
Registered person address	Castle Homes Care Ltd, The Manor House High Street, Rothwell KETTERING Northamptonshire NN14 6BQ
Responsible individual	Shelley Frances Whiting
Registered manager	Debra Julie Leighton
Date of last inspection	20/03/2014

Inspection date	23/09/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
-------------------	-------------

Young people benefit from highly individualised care. The well-established staff team understand and are committed to meeting young people's needs. Staff have high aspirations for young people and support them to develop their skills, talents and identity.

Young people are positive about the care they receive; they have good relationships with the staff. Young people who have moved on retain their relationships with the home, demonstrating the value they place on living there. A young person who has moved on said: 'All staff make me feel at home. I love all staff, I wish I could take them all to live with me.'

Social workers confirm that staff manage risk well. Young people present with high levels of risk-taking behaviour that have reduced during their time living in the home. Young people say that staff manage incidents well, creating a safe environment for them to live in.

There has been one incident of staff failure to follow safeguarding procedures immediately. The organisation has taken robust action to address this. They have implemented additional training and supervision and taken steps to assure young

people's safety.

The manager has good oversight and knowledge of the home and the young people. She understands the home's strengths and consistently identifies areas for development to secure on-going improvement that will benefit young people.

Staff promote young people's cultural identity as a core value of their practice. They promote individuals' rights to access services and resources, advocating firmly on their behalf.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a large private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home offers short, long-term and emergency placements. The home has a school on site, and this is registered with the Department for Education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2014	Interim	good progress
27/06/2013	Full	good
18/12/2012	Interim	good progress
02/05/2012	Full	adequate

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people develop positive relationships with staff. They work on raising their self-esteem and developing their own sense of identity through life story work, activities and cultural experiences. Young people explore their own cultural heritage and share this with their peers. They enjoy religious festivals, such as Eid, promoting cultural diversity in the home.

Each young person has an education package in place to suit their individual needs. Young people increase their attendance in education as a result of living in the home. A social worker said: 'She had less than 30 per cent attendance prior to admission, she was working at primary age levels but she has now caught up educationally which is an excellent achievement.'

Young people make good progress in their leisure activities. They enjoy a range of pursuits, including physical activity and going on holiday. Each young person is able to follow their interests and hobbies. They enjoy activities that give them access to the local community, such as going to the gymnasium, Zumba classes and boxing. The range of opportunities means that young people have been able to enjoy activities they have not previously experienced.

Young people contribute to the group living environment by cooking meals for themselves and the staff and keeping the home clean and tidy. They also contribute to the wider community, with examples of charity work, including raising awareness of arranged marriages. Young people are enterprising, using a dedicated beauty room in the home to offer treatments; the proceeds raised go to charity. This demonstrates that young people are developing a social conscience.

Young people access a range of services to support their physical and mental health. They access specialist substance misuse and sexual exploitation services and engage well, promoting their understanding of their own health needs and risks. Young people attend doctors, dental and optician appointments and access sexual health and smoking cessation support. Consequently, individuals are able to make informed and positive choices about their risk taking behaviour and lifestyles. This is evident in their healthy diets, smoking cessation and physical exercise.

Young people who are preparing to move on take part in independence programmes to prepare them for their onward transitions. They learn to cook, budget, clean, do their own laundry and take responsibility for themselves. This provides young people with the basic skills they need as they enter adulthood.

Young people benefit from positive family contact in line with agreed arrangements as set out in care plans. Family members visit the home, they cook food from their

cultural background and this further reinforces young people's sense of identity.

Quality of care

outstanding

The routines, environment and ethos of the home provide a platform for positive and mutually respectful relationships between young people and staff.

Young people consistently attend the monthly young persons' meetings. This provides a safe space to express views, discuss the impact of behaviour, explore feelings and make decisions. Young people can and do request additional meetings. They actively contribute to the planning and know that their input is making a difference to the way the home runs. They give examples of their input to the décor and menu planning.

Young people say it can be difficult to express views about the impact of one another's behaviour. However, the young people's meetings help them to make their feelings known in a safe way. Young people are able to express their wishes, feelings and preferences and they say staff are proactive and responsive.

Young people are aware of the complaints process and know how to use the system. They are confident that staff will be responsive in contacting other professionals in the event of a complaint.

Care plans provide comprehensive, detailed and current information, supporting staff to provide high quality care on an individual basis. Young people are integral to their care planning and are proactively involved in decision-making about their day to day lives. They are able to express their views and have a say about the way they are cared for in line with their overall care plan. An external professional said: 'Based on progress and support from staff, information available to me including from the young person and my observations and interactions with staff, I rate the placement as excellent.'

Staff in the home are proactive and imaginative in supporting the individual needs of young people. They provide a wealth of knowledge and expertise across all aspects of young people's individual development. This means young people access the physical, emotional and psychological support they need quickly.

The on-site education provision delivers a varied educational programme. Young people have personal education plans and staff work in the education provision alongside the teacher. This means that staff develop their own understanding of individual abilities, strengths and aspirations. As a result, they are able to support young people to identify subjects and areas of interest that will support them to

achieve their full potential. Staff encourage young people to attend mainstream school. They are consistent in challenging barriers to participation in local provision. Consequently, young people access education that meets their needs.

For all young people there is, in line with their individual care planning processes, access to a varied range of leisure and social activities. Young people also have the opportunity to meet up with peers from within the group of homes for activities, one example being culture evenings. Young people contribute to the planning and share opportunities for getting together to learn and experience other cultures.

Young people are encouraged to make use of the tranquil garden. They have been growing vegetables and herbs which they use to make meals. This provides an excellent opportunity for young people to experience and practice skills in health, wellbeing and daily living.

The majority of the young people arrive feeling confused and angry with low self-esteem and lacking in understanding about personal safety issues. The staff team go above and beyond to understand the culture, experience and heritage of the young people. This promotes young people's self-esteem and confidence. One young person talked about how the staff have helped her to become more confident within herself and to realise her potential to do well in life. This young person now aspires to become a lawyer.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people confirm they are able to make complaints, raise concerns and identify people in the home they can talk to. They have confidence that they are listened to, contributing to them feeling safe.

The manager takes a robust approach to risk assessment. Staff and young people read and sign risk assessments before an activity outside of the home takes place. Consequently, young people are aware of the measures in place to promote their safety.

Staff take a proactive approach to bullying. They raise awareness of bullying with young people, discuss expectations of behaviour and manage incidents when they do happen. Staff are aware of what constitutes bullying and how to manage it effectively. This promotes a culture of challenge of unacceptable behaviour.

Staff use sanctions to support young people to understand when their behaviour has been unacceptable and to take responsibility for their actions. Sanctions are fair, proportionate and well recorded. The manager reviews each sanction and ensures that young people are treated fairly. This provides an additional safeguard and gives individuals a formalised opportunity to raise any concerns they have about the fairness of sanctions.

Young people work on individual reward schemes. This helps them to focus on achieving their goals. Staff give positive acknowledgement and reinforcement of all achievements. Consequently, young people live in a high warmth, low criticism environment that helps them to modify their behaviour.

Staff rarely use restraint, with only three incidents since September 2013. It is proportionate and used only as a last resort to ensure young people's safety. Staff are trained and use recognised techniques. The manager debriefs staff and young people following an incident. Consequently, young people are able to give their views and there is a good level of reflection and review of incidents.

There have been five recorded incidents of young people going missing from the home since February 2014. Staff know and follow the procedures for missing from care. There is a good level of key working following an incident of missing, demonstrating that staff have open and honest discussions with young people to support them to reflect on danger, risks and keeping themselves safe.

There has been one safeguarding incident where staff did not report without delay. The registered provider and manager responded swiftly to this shortfall and took steps to implement measures to raise staff awareness. The inspection tracked this incident. Records and discussions evidence that staff understand safeguarding procedures. The incident has not had an impact on young people's safety and has been concluded in line with safeguarding procedures. The inspection found that, due to the actions taken by the provider to address this shortfall, there is no breach of regulations.

The recruitment records for staff demonstrate that managers follow safe recruitment procedures. The processes in place for recruitment of agency and relief staff are robust. Any relief or agency worker is required to complete a temporary staff checklist of activities prior to starting every shift. The system in place is effective and secure. This helps to ensure that all staff working with young people are suitable and fully aware of their needs, care plans and risk assessments.

Health and safety checks and fire precautions are robust, recorded and demonstrate that the safety of the premises are carefully monitored and action taken when shortfalls are identified. This contributes to the physical safety of young people, staff and visitors to the home.

Leadership and management

good

The home has a permanent, qualified and experienced Registered Manager. She became registered with Ofsted to manage the home in November 2013. Prior to this she worked in the home as a deputy manager. She has considerable experience in working with young people and has recently completed the level 5 diploma, meeting

the regulatory requirements. The manager actively embraces development opportunities that support her to provide a good level of care for young people. She provides good leadership of the home, acting as a positive role model for her team.

An independent visitor undertakes external monitoring of the home on a monthly basis. The monitoring is objective, comprehensive and the manager responds to any proposed actions or shortfalls, addressing them immediately. This demonstrates the validity and usefulness of the monitoring.

The manager regularly monitors the quality of care. The monitoring is highly reflective, identifies the ways in which the home can evidence the impact they have on young people's lives and develops plans for future improvement.

There were no requirements or recommendations raised at the last inspection. However, there is a comprehensive development plan in place. The plan identifies areas for improvement, the actions required and the proposed outcomes for the young people. The manager regularly reviews the progress made, demonstrating that the plan is a working document that informs improvement.

Staff and the managers are clear about the progress young people make and the impact living in the home has on their lives. They can demonstrate improved outcomes for young people in a number of different ways.

Young people have the resources they need. The home is well staffed with a balanced team in respect of gender, skills, culture and knowledge. This means young people benefit from diversity within the staff team and identify people they can relate to.

Staff are confident in their role, receive good support and training. They access regular supervision and appraisal, where they are able to identify their development needs. Staff meetings give regular, formalised opportunities for staff to focus on young people and the support they need in order to achieve their potential.

The records in home are clear, professionally written and provide comprehensive detail about young people, their lives, the support they receive and the progress they make.

The manager ensures that she notifies Ofsted and relevant parties of significant incidents in the home. This enables Ofsted, as the regulator, to have an up-to-date view of the home and provides an additional safeguard for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.