

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	22/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC413078
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	Lee Jones
Registered manager	Kelly Watson
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic

Inspection date	22/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC413078

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people receive a very good standard of individualised care, and as a result, they make significant progress in all areas of their lives given their starting points. They are very happy and have excellent and meaningful relationships with staff.
- Young people receive care from a skilled and committed staff team who have high aspirations for all young people. An independent reviewing officer commented that: 'I have to say that the home sets a high standard and in my opinion is one of the best.'
- Young people's safety improves as they are successfully supported to change behaviours that have previously placed them and others at risk of harm.
- Young people's attendance at school is excellent. Staff give very good support to enable them to achieve their full academic and social potential. Feedback from young people's schools is very positive about their progress and achievements since living at the home.
- Empowerment of young people is at the forefront of practice. Young people are central to decision making about the day-to-day running of the home and planning their futures. As a result, they feel listened to, valued and their confidence has increased tremendously.
- Rigorous recruitment practices are key strengths. Young people are involved in recruiting new staff, and getting the right person for the job is top priority.
- The registered manager is committed to continual improvement and this ethos is shared by staff and is embedded in day-to-day practice.
- Staff are proactive in promoting the best interests of young people. They challenge barriers and have forged good partnership working with parents, carers and a range of professionals. This helps young people get the best all-round support to achieve their full potential.

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Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home offers accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The statement of purpose indicates that the age range will be between 8 and 18 years of age.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved Effectiveness
10/12/2014	CH - Full	Good
15/10/2013	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress
28/05/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
Young people receive excellent individualised care and support from a committed and experienced staff team. They are very happy, settled, and thrive in a nurturing environment. They benefit from open and honest relationships with staff which means they trust staff. They have made significant progress in all areas of their lives given their starting points. A social worker commented: 'I think this is an excellent placement, with management and keyworkers very clear about their role, and the work they have done to this stage has been to a very high standard.' Young people have very detailed placement plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans which they are consulted about. Additionally, they complete their own placement plans called 'All about me' which gives them a real opportunity to influence the care they receive. These records inform staff practice and are reviewed regularly, which ensures young people's current needs are being met. Staff produce monthly reports and complete outcome trackers for each young person which helps them to monitor progress. Staff communicate well with social workers and send them updated copies of placement plans and risk assessments. This practice helps social workers to assess if staff are meeting young people's needs, monitor young people's progress and helps in planning young people's futures. Feedback from social workers confirms that staff are very good at communicating with them. Young people's education is a top priority at the home. Staff are very clear about their responsibilities in enabling all young people to reach their full academic and social potential based on their individualised needs. They provide young people with practical as well as emotional support with their education. Young people's attendance is excellent, and for some young people who had a history of non-attendance, this is exceptional progress. As a result, young people's chances of reaching their potential have really increased and this helps them plan for their futures. Staff attend parents'/carers' evenings and other school events and they support young people with their homework and preparing for their examinations. This helps young people know that staff really do care about them. A teacher commented: 'They support the young person with after school activities. I am very impressed with their commitment to the young person.' Young people are encouraged to widen their educational opportunities while at the same time having fun. They learn while engaging in domestic activities such as cooking and learn about equality and diversity issues. They research information	

about different races, cultures and barriers different people in society face. This gives them a better understanding of people's differences.

Young people's health improves because staff are proactive in promoting healthy living. Young people's physical and psychological health needs are met as they access routine health services as well as specialist services where needed. Some young people's health improves as they no longer engage in activities which affect their health, for example, smoking and drinking alcohol. Key-work sessions and young people's meetings are used as learning forums. For example, young people have discussed and used resources on drug misuse and watched videos on child sexual exploitation including online internet safety. Young people also learn about healthy eating and contribute to menu planning. They have been given opportunities to try a range of different and diverse foods such as wild boar and crocodile burgers; they enjoyed these experiences.

Staff provide excellent practical and emotional support to young people to remain in contact with their families and people who are important to them. As a result, young people's relationships with their families have improved greatly, resulting in increased contact.

Young people's confidence and self-esteem increase considerably because they live in a nurturing and enabling environment. Their achievements are celebrated and rewarded. They are given practical as well as emotional support to develop their practical skills and emotional resilience.

Empowerment and enablement of young people are embedded in day-to-day practice. Young people are at the heart of decision making about their daily lives, planning their futures and in the running of the home. They know they are listened to, which makes them feel valued. There is a range of systems which really do encourage empowerment of young people. For example, regular young people's meetings and key-work sessions take place, and consultation questionnaires are distributed by the registered manager. As a result, they are able to choose meals, activities and décor in the home and contribute to the home's development. Staff have a clear commitment to advocating on behalf of young people where necessary and challenging barriers to ensure young people get the support they need. One social worker commented, 'They have been a strong voice for the young person in ensuring he gets the support he requires.'

Staff are committed to ensuring young people have lots of opportunities to pursue their individual interests and hobbies as well as try new ones. Staff have supported young people to continue attending different clubs they attended prior to moving into the home. This means they have been able to maintain friendships and contribute to the wider community. Young people are also encouraged to try new activities, which helps to broaden their experiences. They have fun while at the same time developing their social and practical skills. Young people are also active members of the wider community by taking part in fundraising for different

charities.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Staff are committed to keeping young people safe while at the same time enabling them to live ordinary lives. They provide nurturing care which takes into account young people's histories and the risks they face. As a result, young people's safety improves given their starting points, as their risk-taking behaviours, including engaging in criminal activities and aggressive behaviours, reduce. They feel safe and have more positive outlooks for their futures. Young people have very good relationships with staff; they know staff care about them and want the best for them. They know the complaints procedure, which they very rarely use because they are able to raise any concerns with staff. Young people are confident that their views and concerns will be taken seriously, which helps to protect them from the risk of harm and abuse. Additionally, staff take their responsibilities very seriously and are clear about reporting any child protection issues. Young people's behaviour improves significantly. This is because they are clear about what is expected of them, they learn to take responsibility for their actions and understand the consequences of their behaviours. Staff work closely with other professionals to develop strategies to support young people, and staff apply boundaries consistently. The emphasis is on recognising and rewarding positive behaviours. Restraint has not been used since September 2014, which is testament to the skills of the staff team. Comments received by the independent visitor from one young person's school reflect the progress the young person has made stating, 'They have done some fantastic work regarding the young person's social and emotional health.' Young people rarely go missing, which means they are safer and this demonstrates that they are settled in the home. This is significant progress for some young people who had a history of going missing in their previous placements. Staff work in line with local joint protocols, and young people's risk assessments include details of what to do in the event of a young person going missing. The local police missing person co-ordinator commented that: 'The manager has a clear understanding of the procedure and is aware that the police require evidence if a child is at risk of child sexual exploitation. Without this the police cannot make a complete assessment.'	

The management of health and safety is good and helps to keep young people safe and secure. This is because staff and young people take responsibility for carrying out checks and reporting any health and safety issues. Equipment and installations are serviced as required. Staff carry out weekly fire checks and young people know the fire evacuation procedures.

Safe and rigorous recruitment practices help to ensure young people are protected from the risk of harm and abuse. The registered manager carries out appropriate checks and young people take an active role in the recruitment of new staff.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The registered manager has worked at the home since July 2014 and has many years' experience of working with young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. She has a level 4 qualification in working with children and young people and is currently undertaking the level 5 qualification in leadership and management. Her commitment to studying helps to inform and develop her practice. The registered manager presents as a positive role model, providing clear leadership and direction. Staff speak highly of their manager and feel well supported in their roles. All staff have high hopes and aspirations for young people and this is embedded in the day-to-day care provided. Staff are very experienced and well qualified to meet young people's needs; they thoroughly enjoy their work and this was evident throughout the inspection. Staffing levels are flexible and meet the needs of young people. New staff receive a robust induction which helps them to prepare for working with young people. They work by closely shadowing established staff initially, and a mentor provides additional support and supervision. Feedback is obtained from new staff about the quality of their induction, which helps to improve the induction programme. New staff spoke highly about their induction, telling the inspector how much they appreciated it. Staff receive a range of mandatory training and good quality supervision which helps them to develop further their skills and knowledge. The home's statement of purpose has been updated to reflect the new regulations and quality standards. It gives clear details to young people and key stakeholders about the services provided in the home. Practice is in line with the statement of purpose. For example, key-work sessions are based on individualised needs, and a	

range of activities also provide educational and learning opportunities for young people. Young people are given a welcome pack on admission, which is child friendly and explains what to expect. They are also given a child-friendly health and safety guide.

There is a clear commitment to continual improvement. There is a range of quality assurance systems which help to identify shortfalls and inform future developments. The whole staff team takes responsibility for monitoring services and practices, as shared ownership is a fundamental part of staff practice. A member of staff has produced a draft aide-memoire for staff to use regarding the new regulations and quality standards. Young people's views are listened to and contribute to the development of the home. Quality questionnaires are given to young people and key stakeholders and suggestions are acted upon where appropriate, which help to make improvements at the home. Monthly visits are carried out by an independent visitor which feed into the improvement agenda. The home's development plan reflects progress made but is due to be reviewed to consolidate the new regulations and quality standards.

Partnership working is a priority at the home. Staff have forged very good working relationships with parents, carers and a range of agencies and professionals. This means that young people get the best all-round support, including accessing appropriate services and resources to meet their different needs. Feedback from placing social workers and other professionals confirm that staff work closely with them and communication is very good. A social worker made the following comment, 'I find the home welcoming and very person centred.' Comments received from a young person's school include: 'I have a good working relationship with the manager and the young person's keyworker. If I call they are always willing to talk to me and the exchange of information is very useful.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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