

SC419334

Registered provider: Castle Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in November 2010. The manager registered in June 2021.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 January 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2023	Full	Good
16/12/2021	Full	Good
31/07/2019	Full	Good
20/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive and trusting relationships with staff. This enables them to share their thoughts and feelings with staff. Staff are caring and encourage good behaviours. One child has written a heart-warming letter to staff to thank them for their support, saying that they feel part of a family. The registered manager and staff have also maintained positive contact with children and young people who previously lived in the home, who come back to visit them.

Children are supported to maintain positive relationships with important people in their lives, including their birth families, former foster carers and significant others. Where appropriate, staff have good communication with the people who are important to children, to promote positive relationships.

Children are enrolled in education or apprenticeships. Staff support children to attend by encouraging good routines and waking them up in the mornings. One child regularly refused to attend school. However, staff are consistent in encouraging the child to attend by giving them wake-up calls, preparing breakfast and laying out clean clothes ready to be worn. The organisation's education liaison officer works closely with children's schools and work provisions to support their engagement and individual progress.

Staff understand children's health needs. They support children to attend routine health appointments and give advice and support about personal hygiene and healthy relationships. Staff have put a teethbrushing guide on the bathroom door as a reminder to help children remember to clean their teeth thoroughly.

Children participate in a range of fun and social activities. They visit theme parks, attend weekend youth clubs and go horse riding and to a boxing club. Staff supported one child to participate in a talent competition. Another child won a boxing competition and staff celebrated their success with a cake and congratulations card. This demonstrates staff are interested in children's lives and acknowledge their efforts and achievements.

The physical environment is maintained to a high standard and meets the needs of the children. The living room has been recently decorated and refurnished with new sofas. The children's bathroom has recently been refurbished and includes a beautiful piece of artwork, individually painted by a member of staff in consultation with the children. Children's bedrooms are personalised according to their wishes. One child's trophies and medals are proudly displayed in their bedroom. The staff also built a display box for the child to showcase their championship belt to honour their success.

Children are encouraged and supported to develop their independence skills. This includes helping children to do their laundry, budgeting, shopping and cooking. This

particularly helps the older children to prepare for semi-independence and adulthood.

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

Staff and the registered manager understand children's risks and vulnerabilities. However, strategies in risk assessments to mitigate risks are not always clear, which does not enable new or agency staff to understand the actions they need to take to manage and reduce risks.

Incidents are managed well by staff, who take appropriate action to support children, to prevent similar occurrences. Staff support children to engage with specialist services to help them understand the risks associated with their behaviours. Managers and staff are reflective and carefully consider what consequences are appropriate to help children understand the impact of their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions.

Children's risks and needs are addressed with them in frequent key-work sessions. This helps staff to listen to children's wishes and feelings and understand the triggers and reasons for their behaviours. Positive relationships between staff and children allow key-work sessions to be meaningful and beneficial for children, helping them to learn about appropriate and safe behaviours.

When children go missing from home, staff follow correct protocols to ensure their safety and well-being. They report incidents to the relevant safeguarding agencies and make effort to contact and locate children. When children are absent without permission, staff work with the child's professional and personal network to have arrangements in place to reduce this risk. This creates a mutual understanding, where children feel heard and staff are sure of children's location and well-being. When children return home, debriefs are carried out with them. This ensures that staff are continually reflecting on children's behaviours and their own practice.

Room searches are carried out sensitively to protect children and reduce risks. For example, staff remove items that are inappropriate and talk to children about the risks. This helps to keep children safe in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and staff have high aspirations for the children in their care and understand the children's needs well. The registered manager and a number of staff have been working in the home for a long time. This allows children to build strong and trusting relationships with staff and supports their resilience, because it gives them a strong sense of belonging and connection to the staff.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and their responsibility to report any concerns to managers, leaders or external professionals. Managers and staff take allegations of harm seriously and act promptly when issues arise. This increases children's safety in the home.

The registered manager and senior staff provide supervision that focuses on child-related practice, as well as staff training and development. Staff feel supported in their roles and morale is high. However, a small number of staff have not received consistent and regular supervisions. This does not help the manager have oversight of the staff's individual practice and development needs.

Staff performance and practice are appraised annually. However, staff appraisals do not include feedback from children or external professionals.

Team meetings take place regularly. The manager and staff discuss relevant topics, including children's needs and progress. Staff training needs are discussed and planned. A range of training is planned and provided for staff.

Children who are new to the home are welcomed sensitively, with good planning. Before they move in, children visit the home to familiarise themselves with the home and meet staff and other children. However, the home's pre-admission assessment records are not individual to children in relation to their needs and do not clearly consider staff skills and abilities.

The manager and staff work closely with children's personal and professional networks. Social workers have praised the manager and staff for the level of dedication and care that they provide to children.

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 registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) This requirement has been restated.	16 February 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they have a copy of each child's local authority care plan. They must fully consider the needs of children already living in the home as well as of those moving in, and whether the staff have the skills to meet the needs of all children in their care.	16 February 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff appraisals consider, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and of children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC419334

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Limited

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

Responsible individual: Helen Llewellyn

Registered manager: Sheila Powell-Doyley

Inspector

Amena Begum, Social Care Inspector

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