

1254055

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care for two children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in August 2017. The registered manager post has been vacant since November 2022.

Two children were living at the home at the time of this inspection and were seen by the inspector.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 November 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/12/2022	Full	Good
12/10/2022	Full	Inadequate
01/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children all attend education. The registered manager and staff encourage children to fully engage in education. When children are not in education, the manager and staff advocate on their behalf to support their return to education. There is effective communication between staff and the children's education providers. This approach supports the children's educational attainment.

Children are helped to develop their independence skills. For example, they are helped to understand how to use the washing machine and how to cook. When children are ready, they are supported to develop further independence skills, such as using public transport alone. This gives children the necessary skills to meet their goal of living independently.

Children's views and opinions are considered by staff when making decisions in the home. Staff use creative ways to communicate with children to gain their views based on their age and understanding.

The home is a welcoming and relaxing environment, with photos of the children and staff throughout. Bedrooms and communal areas are personalised. This gives children a sense of belonging.

Staff support the children to spend time and remain in contact with their family. This encourages the children to stay connected with people who are important to them and supports their identity and sense of belonging.

Although staff understand the individual needs of the children, children's written records do not consistently reflect this knowledge. For example, personal education plans (PEPs) are missing for some children. Staff keep their own records of all meetings, thereby limiting the impact of this oversight.

The children are in good health. The staff support children to attend all health appointments. Children are helped to overcome barriers to addressing their health needs. As a result, some children now make their appointments and attend on their own. However, opportunities to educate children on the harmful nature of vapes are missed.

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

The children say that they find the staff approachable and feel that the staff and the managers care for them well. This supports children to share any worries or fears they may have. The children all said, 'We feel safe living here.' One child said, 'It feels like a family home.'

Children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current risks and behaviours. They provide staff with clear guidance on the actions to take to keep the children safe. This helps to ensure that children are safeguarded effectively.

Staff understand and follow the home's missing-from-home policy. Staff are proactive in seeking the safe return of the children. The children are welcomed home warmly by staff when they return home.

A therapist visits the home weekly, working closely with staff to understand the needs of the children. The staff apply strategies learned from the therapist to respond to the children in a way that supports them to manage their feelings and behaviour.

Staff promote positive behaviours in the home. Positive rewards outweigh the use of consequences. The children have an incentive chart with achievable targets. The children participate in the planning of their goals. For example, one child set a target for getting home on time.

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

There has not been a permanent manager in the home since 2022. The responsible individual has had oversight of the home since July 2024. A lack of consistent leadership and management has impacted on the oversight and running of the home.

At the time of this inspection, there was a new manager in post. They have not yet applied to register with Ofsted. The manager is suitably experienced and is working towards gaining a leadership and management qualification.

The responsible individual is visible in the home and has oversight of the home's operation and quality of care. This highlights the positive impact that living in the home has on children's progress and permanence. The new manager and responsible individual work well together and share the same ethos.

The new manager creates an environment that actively promotes and supports staff's professional development. All staff expressed that they feel professionally supported. For example, a new member of staff reflected on how she has been supported in the role and said, 'The new manager has brought the team together.'

Relationships with external agencies and professionals are effective and positive. The registered manager collaborates closely with professionals to ensure that the children receive the right support. Significant events are shared appropriately with the relevant authorities.

A social worker informed the inspector that communication is excellent, noting, 'I receive weekly update reports, and staff support family time.' Relationships with external agencies and professionals are strong and constructive.

Children's views are regularly sought and captured well in the day-to-day operation of the home. Their views are fully considered in their care planning. Staff advocate well on behalf of children.

There are effective monitoring and review systems in place that help the manager to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the service. This enables the leaders and manager to take swift action to address any shortfalls and develop staff practice and the care provided for the 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 provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that an application to register a manager for the home is submitted to Ofsted.	6 December 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. Specifically, the use of vapes in and around the home should be addressed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.10)

- The registered person should ensure that the necessary support is given to children to enable them to access their education and health information. Specifically, they should ensure that PEP paperwork is sought within timescales to support the child's education. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.13)

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: 1254055

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Barton Close, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicester LE19 1SJ

Responsible individual: Grace Cookson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Debbie Dawson, Social Care Inspector

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