

2490998

Registered provider: Sandcastle 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 and accommodation for up to two children who are unable to live with their families.

The home has been without a registered manager since July 2021. The current manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 September 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: 11 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
08/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the visit, two children were living at the home. They have developed good relationships with staff, which helps them to feel secure and settled. The children like the staff and find them supportive. Children are relaxed in the company of staff and live in a welcoming, family oriented environment.

Children have a voice and staff spend time listening to their wishes and feelings. The provision of weekly meetings enables children to express their views and ideas, including individual requests. For example, staff purchased suitcases for the children in preparation for their holidays. Children feel able to talk to staff, who they trust if they have any concerns or worries.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's individual needs and are responsive in their efforts to meet these. For example, despite the placement of a child ending abruptly, staff promoted a positive ending by preparing food hampers, a memory book and a gift, to support the child's move to semi-independence. The social worker said, 'I have nothing but praise for the patience, time and support that all members of the team have given in supporting the child, enabling her to move on to semi-independent living.'

Staff work proactively with outside agencies, such as social workers, to identify suitable educational provision for children newly placed at the home. However, a structured programme of home education for the child is not in place in the interim while awaiting confirmation of a school place. This potentially hinders the child's educational progress. Staff were successful in increasing the school attendance rate for a child prior to her leaving the home, which was a good achievement from her starting point.

Staff provide support to children so that they can spend time with their friends and family. Staff go above and beyond to facilitate this time, for example by transporting children to visit their family. This helps children to feel valued and retain a sense of belonging to people who are important to them.

Children are encouraged and supported to develop basic life skills. As part of the daily routines, children learn to take responsibility for completing tasks. They help with the washing up and take pride in keeping their bedrooms in good shape. Children demonstrate growing independence by preparing and cooking their own meals. In preparation for adult life, older children learn about the importance of money management and are given guidance to help them to look for job opportunities.

Children engage in a good range of fun-based activities, such as pamper evenings with a dedicated 'hair and beauty' room, trips to theme parks and the local cinema. Children volunteered to take dogs out for walks as part of the local community's

'homeless hounds' charity. They also requested a pet hamster and named it 'Baxter'. This is giving children the responsibility to look after animals that need care and attention.

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

Staff are highly committed to maintaining the safety and well-being of children living at this home. They are proactive in reducing risks to children, for example by completing regular welfare checks and undertaking follow-up work with children after incidents of alcohol misuse. Staff organised a 'mocktail' evening which helped to raise awareness about the dangers of consuming alcohol rather than drinks of non-alcoholic content. This contributes to keeping children safe and protecting them from harm.

Risk assessments are of good quality. They are individualised and capture children's known risks and vulnerabilities. Staff demonstrate good insight into the risks and the strategies in place. For example, they know what to do when children go missing from care. Staff take prompt action in following children and involve the police where necessary to bring about a safe return. They also ensure that social workers and parents are kept informed of any incidents.

Staff understand the potential risks posed to children when they are using the internet, such as child sexual exploitation. Staff and children have received relevant training in this area, which has given them the necessary insight into associated dangers. There are suitable measures in place to monitor children's use of mobile phones which are helping children to use them safely.

Children receive the necessary help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings safely, for example through input from the child and adolescent mental health services and the company therapist. Although the level of engagement can vary, children are learning the skills to self-regulate better, which leads to a reduction in incidents. There are suitable measures in place to monitor children's mental health and emotional well-being through individual support and welfare checks.

Not all staff are clear in their understanding of the action to take in response to a child protection concern, such as handling a situation where a child was in possession of indecent images from a friend. Although the police and social worker were notified, the actions taken by the staff member potentially compromised the timeliness of the necessary enquiries being made.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A new manager has recently been appointed. She has applied to register with Ofsted. She has received support and guidance from the previous manager. This has ensured that the home continues to run smoothly. The manager is passionate and knows the children well. The feedback from staff is positive as they say that they are led and managed appropriately.

The manager leads a team of staff that is child centred in its approach. Even though there have been staff changes and sickness during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has shown good resilience and kept a positive team spirit. The manager has been able to cover shifts without relying heavily on agency staff. This means that stability and consistency within the team have been maintained.

The provision of regular practice-related supervision and team meetings enables staff to discuss the progress children are making and any barriers experienced. The input of the company therapist is invaluable as it provides staff with guidance on how to safely manage children's behaviours.

Although staff are up to date with mandatory training, including safeguarding, not all staff have received training in regard to children's specific needs, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. This has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The internal monitoring system for reviewing the quality of care that children receive is overly descriptive in its reporting and does not capture a true critique or analysis of the practice and how this is impacting on outcomes for children.

The manager and staff understand the plans for individual children and are committed in driving important milestones and permanence for their futures. They regularly monitor the progress that individual children make and ensure that they source the necessary help and input from specialist agencies where necessary. Case records reflect children's lived experiences, including memory books and related plans.

Overall, the quality of record-keeping is good, including the matching of children documents. However, the rationale and decision-making for children coming to live at the home are not captured. Furthermore, there is a lack of clarity in the record when imposing consequences. A record implies that a child was prevented from seeing a friend for a week after refusing to return to the home. The manager acknowledges that the record in this instance is not clear and does not represent the true circumstances.

The requirements set at the previous inspection are now met.

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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(viii)(x))	15 October 2021
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff seek appropriate advice from the manager and/or relevant outside agencies prior to making decisions about matters of a child protection nature.	15 October 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	15 October 2021

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and

promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))

This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that, as part of her internal monitoring systems, all staff receive the necessary training to meet the needs of each child and, through supervision, there is reflection of new learning and how this is to be embedded into practice. In addition, records kept must accurately reflect decisions made around admissions and the use of consequences.

Recommendation

- The registered person should make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. This relates to capturing an effective evaluation of the practice within the home and the impact this has on children's outcomes from their starting points. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 2490998

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Registered provider address: Sandcastle Care Limited, 49 Whitegate Drive,
Blackpool FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: Angela Farmer

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Michael Charnley, Social Care Inspector

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