

2495513

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to two children who may have social, emotional and/or behavioural needs.

The registered manager has been in post since April 2020.

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.

We last visited this setting on 18 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 8 and 9 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

This home provides extremely effective services that contribute to considerably improved outcomes for all children. Therefore, all children are making exceptional progress from their starting points in all areas of their development, including education, health and their behaviours.

Since the last visit, two children have been supported to move on from the home. The registered manager and staff team ensured that the children had positive endings to their time at the home. The children maintain contact with the staff on a regular basis, and one child called in unannounced during the inspection. He spoke positively about his experiences and the support provided by the staff team.

Children have excellent relationships with staff and benefit from the family atmosphere in the home. The home is presented to a high standard, and the atmosphere is very relaxed.

All children's healthcare needs are detailed in their plans. Healthcare plans fit together with key-work sessions to assist children in making informed decisions and choices in their lives. Topics such as knife crime, substance misuse, sexual health, healthy eating and exercise are examples of some of the excellent work that is carried out with children during key-work sessions. This work is completed in conjunction with outside agencies such as the police and healthcare workers.

Staff work closely with children's families, which is a considerable strength of the home. Staff spoke about 'co-parenting' a child alongside their mother and have equipped parents with the necessary skills to continue to support and develop their children. Consequently, family relationships have significantly improved, and children spend quality time with family members.

Transitions in and out of the home are well planned and effective. When a child moves in, careful and individual planning is put in place to ensure they are warmly welcomed. Children are sent video footage of the home so they can see it before they move in. One child said that this had relieved their anxieties and enabled them to settle in quickly. A child's social worker said, 'The staff always go above and beyond and treat every child as an individual. The staff team always talk about the positives first and are extremely child-centred.'

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have consistently encouraged children to talk about their views, worries and concerns. They reinforced to children the importance of the guidance about social distancing and wearing masks. One child feels strongly and wishes to be vaccinated at the earliest opportunity, after being informed and educated by staff. Despite children not being able to access activities

during the national lockdowns, the staff team identified creative activities that encouraged participation.

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

Children live in a very safe environment and they are protected from harm. The staff are well trained in safeguarding and can recognise the signs of abuse. They know what they need to do when they have concerns about children, and they take action to safeguard children in their care. Staff spoke about the children with immense pride and consideration. One member of staff said, 'If we can't get things right, we have failed them'.

The staff have exceptional relationships with the police. These have strengthened safeguarding practices and the relationship the children have with police officers. If children go missing from the home, all staff ensure that they liaise effectively with social workers, the police and children's families and friends to coordinate searches and contact. Staff's strong relationships with the children enable them to be successful in locating the children and supporting them to return home safely. Staff complete and review comprehensive risk assessments and behaviour management plans appropriately when new risks arise and when behaviours become stable and are no longer of concern. This ensures that plans remain current and effective.

The registered manager and staff appropriately balance the need for protection with enabling children to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. A child was recently given a mobile phone when he became more independent. The child was involved in identifying and agreeing a plan to keep him safe in the community, which has led to positive outcomes. The child told the inspector, 'They [staff] trust me and treat me like a normal teenager. Because of that I come home at the agreed time.'

Children's behaviour is usually very good, and it has significantly improved over time. Children benefit from a nurturing and structured environment where positive behaviour is actively promoted through praise and rewards. Children said that they are treated fairly and that they can openly discuss any concerns they may have with staff. When they are worried about something, they actively seek support from staff. Children trust that staff will support them and they feel comfortable confiding in them.

For all children, risk-taking behaviours have significantly reduced while living at this home. All children are engaging in education, and staff go above and beyond to ensure children get the most out of their education and training. Staff's strong links with local agencies and provisions enable children to excel in their education. One education professional said, 'I cannot sing the praises of the manager and staff enough. They are proactive and will challenge if it is in the child's best interests. They provide whatever level of support a child needs and it shows in the education outcomes for children.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A dynamic, experienced and suitably qualified registered manager leads the team. He consistently provides strong leadership to an extremely stable, committed and competent staff team. Staff respond enthusiastically to his expectation that they deliver excellent care to all children.

All children benefit from living in a home that supports and promotes their emotional, safety and learning needs, and helps them to progress in leaps and bounds. Staff are very proud of children's achievements and help children to consistently improve their knowledge and understanding of the risks that they may face in society.

Professionals consistently comment on the excellent quality of care provided. Education professionals report that the staff team is readily available to support children and works hard to support them in meeting their needs. Placing authorities are equally complimentary about the home and say that staff are skilled in offering safe care to children. One child's social worker told the inspector, 'Staff have an excellent understanding of children's needs and provide excellent interaction, care and support. I would not change anything about the home or the staff.'

The registered manager conducts thorough and transparently recorded monitoring of the home. Through reflective discussions and carefully planned approaches, the staff continue to develop and deliver services that have proven benefit to children. The children say that staff are like family and want the best for them in all areas of their lives. Because of consistent and responsive consultation with all stakeholders, there have been no complaints about the home.

The registered manager works with independent visitors, who visit on behalf of the provider, to assess the quality of care provided and to identify any development needs required for the home to continue to progress. Any actions identified are added to the outcomes from the manager's monitoring of the home and are absorbed into improvements. Staff consistently talk to children about their lives and ensure that their views are central to the running of the home.

Children are clear that they are involved in all aspects of the running of the home. However, records could be strengthened to capture their views consistently.

Children speak warmly about the care they receive and the efforts that staff go to on their behalf. Because staff focus on individual need in a highly skilled and consistent way, the development of the home continues when those living in the home change.

Staff carefully assess and record the progress made by children in all areas of their lives. This information is shared with all stakeholders so that placing authorities are clear about the impact the home is having. When children experience barriers to success, staff's natural can-do attitude and excellent analysis of the difficulty help them to overcome those barriers. For example, when families have difficulty relating

to professionals, the home offers a different opportunity for them to work with their child's plans.

Staff benefit from regular supervision sessions. They say that these help them to reflect on their performance and ensure that they continually improve the quality of care they provide. The staff team all talk about the support they receive from the manager and his commitment to operating the home to a very high standard. When the registered manager was not available to carry out supervision sessions, the responsible individual took over this task. This ensured that staff continued to receive support and guidance.

The registered manager works with the provider to identify training and development needs for the team. He ensures that these are reflected in the development plan for the home. The registered manager is aspirational for both staff and children's development. He leads training about leadership and management skills and about the changing regulatory childcare agenda. Staff approach their work with children with increased knowledge and understanding of the background to their work. This helps them to be confident in the way they support children and work with other professionals to achieve continuing progress.

When required, the responsible individual has overseen the running of the home effectively. He has been proactive in ensuring that staff are fully supported and has provided oversight when incidents occurred. Staff said that the responsible individual also has high expectations but is approachable and easy to talk to.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Whenever possible, staff in day-to-day contact with children should include staff from the different gender groups. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.22)
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 11.19)

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: 2495513

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

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

Responsible individual: David Lahey

Registered manager: Chris Paraskeva

Inspectors

Jessica Higginson, Social Care Inspector

Michelle Edge, Social Care Inspection Manager

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