

2514259

Registered provider: Solent Child Care 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 two children who experience social and emotional difficulties. There were two children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager has been in post since August 2024.

Staff are referred to as 'adults' in the home and this is reflected in this report.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 January 2025

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	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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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: 20 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2024	Full	Good
27/02/2023	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
24/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children benefit from highly personalised care and nurturing relationships with adults who understand their needs extremely well. Adults relate to children with genuine warmth and respect and there is a sense of fun in day-to-day interactions. The care children receive helps them to make exceptional progress, including overcoming anxiety and making important friendships.

Adults help children to enjoy a wide range of activities, pursue their own unique interests and have new experiences. One child has constructed a chicken hatchery, and the other is building on their ice-skating skills. Children are supported sensitively to spend positive time with peers. This helps children to have a positive sense of self, enhance their social skills and broaden their horizons.

Adults frequently spend time with children and show interest in them. Skilled individual and joint work with children is embedded in daily practice to explore their wishes, feelings and relevant issues. This helps children to feel heard and cared for and to approach challenges, such as starting a new social group.

Adults understand the value of education and learning. They support children to have healthy routines around school attendance and home learning. Adults are proactive in communicating with education colleagues to ensure that children are well supported and understood. As a result, both children are making excellent progress in accessing and engaging in their education.

Children's important relationships are valued and supported. Adults work well with professionals and family members to ensure that children see and keep in touch with family members in line with their care plans. They closely monitor children's experiences and work constructively with others to review plans when needed to make sure family time is positive for children.

The home is warm, comfortable and child friendly. The children also benefit from a large garden that is well maintained. Adults actively celebrate children and their achievements. These are beautifully captured in photos and in children's memory books. There is a strong and positive sense of children throughout the home, including in their bedrooms, which they are helped to personalise. This all helps children to feel a sense of belonging and boosts their self-esteem.

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

There is a strong safeguarding ethos in the home. Adults understand their safeguarding responsibilities and children's individual vulnerabilities well. Managers have effective oversight of safeguarding concerns, and they work constructively with partner agencies

such as the police and the local authority designated officer when required. This helps children to be and feel safe.

When children show behaviours of distress, adults respond helpfully. They work hard to help children express difficult feelings and to de-escalate situations. Physical interventions are only used as a last resort. There is strong oversight, and thorough follow-up discussions with children and adults after difficult incidents allow for reflection and learning. This helps to identify patterns and inform changes in how adults support children. For one child, this has helped bring about a reduction in the need for physical interventions.

Managers are proactive in sharing concerns with relevant professionals to inform reviews of safety plans for children. For example, when there were increased concerns about risks in the home, timely and careful planning with the placing authority enabled robust action to be taken. This supported the placement of one child effectively and prevented a placement breakdown. This shows that children's safety and stability are priorities.

Adults support children to behave positively with each other. Risks between children are well understood and managed. Protocols are regularly updated to reflect changes and give clear, relevant guidance to adults. When there are difficult incidents between children, adults support them to share their feelings and learn from what has happened. There is excellent management oversight of this work. This support helps children to enjoy more activities and time together while also ensuring their safety.

Adults carry out a range of health and safety checks and assessments. They help children in an age-appropriate way to understand risks and the emergency procedures for the home. This helps children to understand risk and how to keep themselves safe.

The provider has safer recruiting procedures that are followed most of the time. However, records do not consistently capture when and by whom an adult's original copy of their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate was seen. Therefore, it is not always possible for the manager to confirm that these checks were carried out. Managers understand the need to verify the reasons why adults left previous employments where they have worked with children or vulnerable adults. However, these checks were not fully completed for one new member of staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager alongside a trainee manager. Managers are enthusiastic about their roles, are child focused and are aspirational for children. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the home. This makes them good role models as adults who underpin a culture of child-centred practice.

There have been changes in the team of adults since the last inspection. Managers understand the importance of consistency for children and took swift action to improve recruitment and retention. As a result, the adult team is more stable. Sessional adults who are well-known to the children are used to complement the core team, as well as a small number of familiar agency workers when required. This has minimised the impact of the changes of adults working with children. This has enabled children to build trusting relationships with new adults.

Adults describe feeling well supported by managers and colleagues. They say managers are flexible, available and helpful. Adults receive regular supervision and appraisals and have opportunities to discuss difficult incidents with managers. However, adults who are on probation do not consistently receive the additional one-to-one supervision in accordance with the organisation's policy. This is a missed opportunity to bolster support and learning for them.

Team meetings are used constructively to give adults a space to reflect and consider different approaches with regular input from the in-house therapist. The welfare of adults is consistently considered in these forums.

The adults have a wide range of skills and are appropriately qualified or on track to complete the required qualifications. Managers ensure that adults undertake a range of relevant training, such as safeguarding and positive behaviour management. They have a system in place to support oversight of training and qualifications. This is effective for full-time adults. However, training for some sessional workers has fallen behind. Managers recognise this and have begun to make changes.

Adults maintain highly effective communication with partner agencies. Social care professionals give very positive feedback in relation to the care of children, communication and working relationships with adults. This helps children to receive coordinated, individualised support. One professional said, 'It is without doubt the best home I have had the opportunity to work with... The entire staff team appears to genuinely care about the children... Their dedication is not only commendable but truly inspiring.'

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.

Requirements	Due date
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, ensure that original copies of DBS certificates are seen, and a clear record is kept of this; and that the reasons for adults leaving previous roles are verified in line with Schedule 2.	19 March 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice in relation to all employees. Specifically, ensure that all adults employed as sessional workers are up to date with required training and that adults on probation receive additional one-to-one supervision in line with company policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2514259

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Solent Child Care Limited

Registered provider address: 9 St Georges Yard, Castle Street, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7LW

Responsible individual: Katherine Sims

Registered manager: Kelly Smith

Inspector

Jacob Robson, Social Care Inspector

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