

2531755

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in August 2019 and the manager registered in April 2024.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 September 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: 1 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/02/2022	Full	Good
05/08/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child has left the home since the last inspection, moving to another home that better meets their needs. The child was supported through this transition to ensure that their new placement got off to a good start.

The two children currently residing at the home have lived at the home for a long time. This is their home, and they enjoy living here. They have good relationships with staff and with each other. As in any family with strong attachments, children say that they want to remain at the home in the care of people who know them best, until they reach adulthood. This sentiment reflects the emotional security that children develop during their time at the home, providing them with the foundation they need to make good progress across all aspects of their development.

Children's attendance at school and engagement in learning has improved. One child is now making new friends at school, and bakes cakes to share with them. This is a small but significant improvement for the child. Another child is highly motivated to continue in post-16 education, and is ambitious to secure a career where they can help other people.

Children's emotional health and their ability to deal with setbacks in life improve because of the therapeutic support they receive. One family member commented positively about the considerable change they had seen in their child's ability to deal with challenges and big emotions, in a way they had not thought possible.

Children are fit and healthy because the manager and staff pay attention to the detail of children's diets, sleep patterns and personal care, all of which have improved. Children's primary healthcare needs are met through routine appointments with dentists and opticians. When childhood accidents happen, or new medication is required, the manager and staff work in tandem with healthcare professionals to ensure that children's long-term well-being is secured.

Children are supported to maintain relationships with people who are important to them. In one case, this has led to increased time spent with family and unsupervised overnight stays with a family member, who said 'this has made us feel like a normal family again'.

Children's views are regularly sought, heard and acted on. They cover a range of issues, such as where to go on holiday and how best to help them manage their behaviours or low moods. This shows children that staff are interested in them and what they think, and helps them to develop insight into their own emotions and the impact of the choices they make.

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

Children say that they feel safe at the home. Family members and professionals agree that children are safe here.

Children respond well to the predictable routines at the home. They are happy to comply with safeguarding measures, such as handing in their mobile phones at night and keeping in touch with staff while they are out and about. Warmth, praise and rewards are used to promote positive behaviour, and staff rarely need to use physical holds. As a result, the home is calm and children's relationships with each other are friendly and caring.

As they approach adolescence, children sometimes test the boundaries set for them. On the whole, children are too busy enjoying their lives to become involved in serious risk-taking behaviours. On the few occasions where children have gone missing from the home, staff have followed the agreed protocols and made every effort to locate the child and bring them home safely.

Children are protected because, as recommended at the last inspection, improvements have been made to the staff recruitment process. This now fully ensures that only those who are suitable to work with children are employed at the home. The provider has also taken prompt and decisive action to dismiss staff when they are deemed to be unsuitable to work with children.

All health and safety requirements are met. This means that children live in an environment that is safe from hazards. Fire drills are successful in ensuring that everyone is able to leave the house safely and quickly in the event of a fire. However, children could be further protected by ensuring that specialist advice is sought on the circumstances under which individual children would benefit from a personal evacuation plan.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has made a strong impression in the home and achieved rapid improvement in terms of structure, staffing, monitoring and safeguarding. This has had a positive impact on the quality of care provided to children, and staff morale. Staff are skilled at meeting the competing needs of children because of the support they receive through training, supervision and annual appraisals. This also promotes staff development and helps to bring about improvement in the care that children receive.

There is effective team working and communication with other agencies and family members, who all commented positively about the partnership working. This helps

to keep children at the forefront of the care planning process, as well as providing valuable safeguarding oversight.

Social workers agree that the home implements children's care plans. However, the most up-to-date documents are not always on children's files. This is an administrative oversight that has no impact on the care or safety of children, but is a shortfall that should be escalated to ensure that these are provided in a timely manner.

The manager continuously monitors the quality of care provided for children, which is summarised in a comprehensive six-monthly report. This sets clear and realistic actions for further improvement, but does not include the feedback of staff. This is a missed opportunity to learn from the experience and insight of the staff team.

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 complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2) (5)) In particular, ensure that the opinions of staff are considered and included in the review.	18 October 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislations. Specifically, seek professional advice on when to devise and implement personal evacuation plans page. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that they and their staff engage proactively with the placing authority to contribute fully to the relevant plans for the child's care on an ongoing basis. In particular, ensure that an up-to-date copy of the child's care plan and placement plan are on file, and escalate the matter if it has not been provided by the local authority in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.3)

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: 2531755

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Penelope Rafferty

Registered manager: Rehnaz Mushtaq

Inspector

Stella Henderson, Social Care Inspector

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