

South Coast Fostering Limited

South Coast Fostering

Mirror Works Unit Mi.113, 12 Marshgate Lane, Stratford, London E15 2NH

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The agency is part of the Positive Aspirations Group, which provides central support and functions to the agency.

The agency offers a range of fostering opportunities for children from birth to 18 years. These include emergency, short-, medium- and long-term homes for children.

At the time of this inspection, the agency had 16 fostering households and was providing care for 21 children. There are also two 'staying put' placements.

Inspection dates: 12 to 16 January 2026

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 independent fostering agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the independent fostering agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of last inspection: 12 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The agency achieves outstanding outcomes for children, as evidenced by significant progress in education, independence and emotional wellbeing. Children have successfully transitioned to full-time education, excelled in college courses and developed confidence in expressing their views. Achievements include winning competitions, passing driving theory tests and overcoming language barriers, along with improved school performance. Emotional stability and identity are strengthened through continuity of relationships and memory-making experiences, culminating in life-changing milestones, such as a former foster child becoming a foster carer. These examples reflect highly effective, child-centred practice that promotes aspiration, resilience and long-term success.

Children speak positively about their experiences of being fostered. They discuss being helped to go to school, having friends to play with and going on holidays. They talk about their foster carers cooking their favourite meals and supporting them. All the children shared their aspirations. One spoke of their plan to go to university and to study as a human rights lawyer. Another child expressed how settled she feels by referring to her foster carer as 'mum'. This child said that they felt 'spoilt' and 'loved' and said, 'Living with mum (foster carer) is like it's my forever home, and I am in heaven because I have everything I need and want.'

Foster carers have provided an overwhelmingly positive evaluation of the fostering agency, highlighting consistent, high-quality support, strong professional relationships and a clear culture of care and responsiveness. The foster carers emphasised feeling valued, listened to and well supported by supervising social workers and the wider team, particularly praising their availability, reliability and practical guidance, including in the evenings and at weekends.

The agency is viewed by foster carers as going beyond basic expectations by offering regular training, support groups, user-friendly systems and a wide range of leisure activities that benefit carers and children, contributing to a strong sense of community and wellbeing. Foster carers' comparisons with previous fostering experiences further reinforce that this agency offers professionalism, communication and support, leading to personal growth, sustained commitment to fostering and high levels of satisfaction and trust.

The agency demonstrates a highly aspirational and child-centred approach through a range of creative and reflective initiatives designed to promote positive experiences and personal development. The Positive Aspirations Task Force and SPARKS programme actively support children's interests and ambitions, ensuring that individual goals are nurtured through practical opportunities, such as book clubs, sports engagement and educational visits.

Heritage fun day celebrates cultural identity, and involving children in designing the new agency logo through the Positive Aspirations Task Force empowered them to contribute meaningfully to organisational development. These initiatives reflect a child-centred approach that values participation, education and individuality.

Practical support, such as funded holidays and comprehensive training calendars, further enhances the quality of care and retention. Collectively, these measures reflect an innovative, inclusive and aspirational culture that prioritises children's voices, celebrates achievements and strengthens relationships across the fostering community.

The agency demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting engagement, learning and identity through creative and inclusive initiatives. Activities such as the winter book club encourage literacy and choice, while the children's newsletter provides clear communication on events, advocacy and age-appropriate workshops, including vital sessions on rights and entitlements for care leavers.

Records reflect outstanding support practices that prioritise family connections, cultural sensitivity and creative problem-solving. Staff have gone above and beyond to facilitate meaningful contact, from arranging supervised visits and sleepovers to supporting international family links and advocating with local authorities for checks to enable safe family involvement. Examples include managing high-frequency contact, using innovative approaches, such as learning basic Polish to aid communication, and creating memorable experiences, such as family celebrations and shared activities. These actions demonstrate a strong commitment to maintaining relationships, promoting identity and ensuring that children experience positive, memorable moments with their families, even in challenging circumstances.

All records are written in a child-friendly style, reinforcing achievements and aspirations while enabling transparency with birth families. Additional initiatives, including 'Moments That Matter', themed workshops, and reflective practice sessions, highlight a strong commitment to valuing foster carers and staff, promoting emotional wellbeing and continuous improvement.

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

The agency has established a highly effective management monitoring system that provides comprehensive oversight of risk and stability for the children. The categorised tracker enables managers to identify and respond promptly to indicators such as missing-from-home episodes, gang involvement, self-harm and child sexual exploitation. Automated alerts ensure that any required changes to safer care plans are immediately communicated to supervising social workers and senior leadership, supporting timely intervention. Weekly reports further enhance accountability by highlighting key developments, including school attendance, health concerns and staff engagement, which allows leaders to monitor both child progress and workforce activity. This proactive and systematic approach ensures that the agency

remains ahead of emerging risks, meets local authority expectations and delivers consistent, high-quality support to children and foster carers.

Serious incidents do not feature highly for the agency. However, records are kept that are comprehensive and detail the support that both the child and the carer receive. Information is shared promptly and appropriately with all safeguarding partners. Furthermore, a wide range of training and support tools are available to support the carers. Management oversight is evident across all records.

All serious incidents are notified appropriately and in good time. They include sufficient detail to understand the incident and note the subsequent actions by the agency to safeguard the child and the foster carer.

The agency follows a rigorous approach to the recruitment and assessment of foster carers and supervising social workers. Records detail the scrutiny applied to ensure that the agency is compliant with regulation and that children are safely cared for, including regular unannounced visits and supervision.

Foster carers confidently discuss the support they receive when faced with challenges. A prompt and efficient on-call system, coupled with up-to-date safer care plans and risk assessments that detail the strategies and responses for carers, means that children are safeguarded.

The agency's approach to reviewing placement breakdowns and endings is highly effective, demonstrating strong curiosity, thorough analysis and a commitment to learning and improvement. Each review provides a comprehensive account of the factors contributing to the placement ending and, where possible, incorporates the child's perspective, ensuring that their voice is considered. Additionally, the process routinely involves input from all relevant professionals and foster carers, enabling a collaborative and informed review. Overall, this structured and inclusive method is a valuable practice that not only identifies lessons learned but also implements actions aimed at preventing or mitigating unplanned placement disruptions in the future.

Management meetings reflect a proactive approach to improving foster care practice and management oversight. Key strengths include the adoption of a more effective format for management learning groups, the timely reporting and resolution of safeguarding concerns, and appropriate escalation to Ofsted if required.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Since the last inspection, the agency has embedded a culture of consultation, engaging foster carers, supervising social workers and children through surveys and forums, which have informed practice and improved trust.

Initiatives such as birth children support groups, specialist training and recognition schemes promote inclusion and resilience in foster families. Financial support measures, including council tax contributions, enhance retention and demonstrate value for carers. Plans focus on meeting emerging needs, including specialist

provision for children with complex needs and neurodiversity, alongside proactive recruitment strategies. These developments, combined with measures to maintain staff stability and workforce expertise, reflect a forward-thinking approach that prioritises quality, sustainability and responsiveness to the needs of children and carers.

Leaders and managers have embedded professional empathy and trauma-informed practice as fundamental to their leadership framework, ensuring that these principles are consistently applied across all areas of operation. This approach is not limited to theoretical concepts but is integrated into practical processes, including meeting structures, templates and training for staff and foster carers.

Through ongoing dialogue, research, and adaptation of models to suit the agency's unique context, the initiative has demonstrably improved workplace culture, resulting in greater emotional intelligence, reflection and self-awareness among staff, which, in turn, positively influences foster carers. The implementation of this model as a continuous 'golden thread' throughout the organisation reflects a strong commitment to sustainable practice, inclusivity and the development of a trauma-informed workforce.

Leaders and managers demonstrate outstanding practice in fostering a strong, values-driven culture supported by highly effective leadership and systems. They show a strong commitment to growth and sustainability through strategic planning, consultation and innovative initiatives. Succession planning has been strengthened by recruiting an additional team manager to ensure continuity and stability.

Supervising social workers report excellent induction experiences, structured onboarding and tailored supervision that promote confidence and professional growth.

Key professionals exhibit expertise and innovation across referral management, education advocacy, recruitment, therapeutic mentoring and governance, all underpinned by reflective practice and child-centred decision-making. Collectively, these approaches ensure high-quality care, workforce stability and continuous improvement, reflecting exceptional standards of leadership and service delivery.

The agency demonstrates outstanding performance in its panel processes. Reports are delivered promptly, with statutory checks undertaken and paperwork consistently available ahead of panel meetings, ensuring seamless operations. Assessments are of high quality overall, particularly those carried out by independent supervising social workers. Assessment reports are rarely below standard.

Panel membership is diverse and offers valuable challenge through care-experienced individuals and active foster carers. Annual appraisals are well organised and supported effectively through administrative and advisory arrangements.

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 Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: 2580767

Registered provider: South Coast Fostering

Registered provider address: Mirror Works Unit Mi.113, 12 Marshgate Lane,
Stratford, London E15 2NH

Responsible individual: Melanie Yearwood

Registered manager: Sally Barnett

Telephone number: 02394210919

Email address: info@southcoastfostering.co.uk

Inspector

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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