

2582248

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private company. It provides care for up to two children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2020.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2024

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: 27 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2023	Full	requires improvement to be good
28/02/2023	Full	good
20/07/2021	Full	good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff are caring and nurturing in their approach to children. As a result, children say that they feel safe and secure. Staff work hard to build excellent relationships with children. These relationships provide the foundation for children to flourish. Children identify the registered manager and staff team as family. One child said, 'We are a big family, I don't know where I would be without them.'

Staff are committed to the children, and this continues when children move on from the home. This includes providing ongoing practical and emotional support to children who are no longer living in the home. Children choose to maintain relationships with staff when they move out of the home and will contact staff long after they have moved on.

Children's views are routinely sought and acted on. Children understand how their views have been responded to and feel that their views are taken seriously.

Children's plans are written to them using accessible language which clearly distinguishes between fact and opinion. This helps staff to focus on children's experiences. The registered manager is creative and uses the children's hobbies and interests to help children to understand their life story and care planning processes. For one child who loves football, their plan says: 'The grown-ups are like football coaches, they set clear rules and give you lots of love and support. They help you learn cool tricks to handle your feelings and behave like a champ.' This approach enables children to fully understand and contribute to their plans.

Children attend education and make academic progress. Staff are ambitious for children and create an environment in which education is valued. As a result, children develop a positive attitude towards learning and develop friendships outside of the home. Barriers to children achieving their potential are quickly identified and resolved. Staff support children to develop their independence skills in line with their abilities. This gives children life skills for the future.

Children's health improves because of the excellent care provided by staff. Staff work closely with health professionals to ensure that children's health needs are met. The registered manager provides appropriate challenge to health professionals when children experience delay in having their health needs met. The registered manager works closely with the in-house therapist to develop and regularly review children's plans. As a result, staff have clarity on steps that they should take to meet children's emotional health needs.

Staff help children to learn about their heritage and build on their own identities. Staff host celebrations and events specific to the individual identities of children in their care. As a result, children develop a sense of belonging.

Children make positive memories living in this home. Staff support children to pursue their own interests and provide children with a wide range of experiences. This builds

children's confidence and social experiences. Children enjoy going on holidays abroad with staff. Staff capture children's memories in memory books. This provides children with an important record of their childhood.

Staff help children to stay connected and build positive memories with people who are important to them. This enables children to maintain important relationships and build on their support networks for the future. Excellent communication between staff and parents creates continuity between home and family. The registered manager supports parents to understand the evolving needs of their children which enables them to improve children's experiences during family time.

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

Children's risks significantly reduce because of the care that they receive from staff. Staff have a thorough understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Children's plans detail children's known needs and provide staff with clear steps to take to keep children safe.

Children do not go missing from home. This demonstrates the success of the relationships staff have with children. Children say that staff care about them, and that staff will not give up on them.

Staff are trained to manage children's behaviour and hold them safely. However, staff have not held children. This is because staff have effectively used de-escalation strategies to support children to prevent them being a risk to themselves or others. This reinforces the message to children that staff can keep them safe.

The registered manager works closely with external professionals to share strategies used in the home which help to keep children safe. For example, one child experiences being held by staff in school regularly. In contrast staff have not held this child since they moved into the home. The registered manager is working with education to share their knowledge and experience to reduce the need for the child to be held in school. This collaborative working supports the reduction of risks to children outside of the home.

Staff complete work with children to help them to understand known risks. This helps children to understand how to be increasingly safe. As a result, children's risk-taking behaviours have reduced. Staff provide children with consistent responses and help them to develop strategies to manage difficult feelings safely.

Children experience clear boundaries which helps children to understand what is expected of them. Staff promote positive behaviour and use consequences as a last resort. When consequences are used these are proportionate and discussed with the child. Children are involved in identifying their own incentives and rewards which empowers children to take responsibility for their own behaviours.

Children benefit from living in a welcoming home environment. Children have access to an enclosed garden which provides an outdoor space for them to use. The staff maintain

the home to a high standard and ensure that it is a safe environment for the children to live in.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A dedicated and child focused registered manager leads this home. The registered manager has formed relationships with children underpinned by trust and respect. She is visible in the home and leads the staff by example.

The registered manager has a detailed understanding of the care that children receive and the impact that this has on their outcomes. The monitoring and quality assurance processes used are effective. The registered manager routinely completes observations of staff practice and seeks regular feedback from children, families, and professionals to inform a continued evaluation of practice. She takes decisive action to resolve any shortfalls in staff practice.

Staff are united with a shared purpose and commitment to the children in their care. The excellent level of staff retention has ensured that children receive consistency of care. Staff morale is high with staff saying that they enjoy working in the home and feel supported by the registered manager.

The registered manager leads a culture of learning and development. She has high expectations of herself and the staff team. Research, theory and practice tools are used to inform ongoing practice development. The registered manager is committed to developing practice to improve the experiences of children. Staff receive open and honest feedback about their performance. This helps staff to understand what is expected of them.

All staff are appropriately qualified. Staff access a range of training opportunities which ensure that staff have the skills to meet the evolving needs of the children. Staff have regular supervision and attend team meetings which provides staff with opportunities to reflect and improve their practice.

Feedback from professionals is overwhelmingly positive. One social worker said that she receives weekly updates which informs her understanding of the child's experiences. The registered manager appropriately challenges professionals when they do not meet children's needs. This ensures that any delays in children's needs being met are resolved quickly.

No shortfalls were identified during this inspection.

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: 2582248

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Amber Steib

Registered manager: Tracy Almond

Inspector

Sally Griffiths, Social Care Inspector

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