

# 2634720

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is one of a number of homes operated by a large private organisation. The provider states in the home's statement of purpose that it provides care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties.

There are two children residing at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2021.

### Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

|                                                                                           |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

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:** 14 February 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 14/02/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 11/01/2022      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

A child who has lived here since the last inspection has been supported to make exceptional progress. They have remained settled, happy and said they feel safe. The nurturing, accepting and resilient approach from the adults caring for him has provided the child with a secure base. This has allowed the child to feel confident to express themselves and explore their interests.

Staff successfully support children who move in or out, with sensitivity and consideration of their individual needs. One child's bedroom was thoughtfully decorated prior to them moving in, incorporating their interest in superheroes. A social worker said, 'They [staff] have been patient and kind to [name of child] to help him settle in his new home.'

Children are supported to attend education. One child, who did not engage in education prior to living here, now has 100% attendance, and is either meeting or exceeding their targets. Staff use creative ideas to encourage children who struggle with attendance. For example, staff use imaginative games themed around the child's favourite superheroes when they are struggling with the morning routines to help them calm and attend school, ready to learn.

Children's health needs are prioritised to ensure that they are met. Staff have sought private dental care for children to avoid any delay in treatment. Staff support children with additional health needs and ensure that medication is administered and recorded accurately.

Staff celebrate and encourage children's interests and hobbies. One child has a keen interest in planes. They regularly visit the local airports to watch planes. Additionally, at the child's request, staff take the child on planes for daytrips to different countries, including Malaga, Denmark, Bulgaria and Dublin. Staff spend time with the child researching the costs involved and making plans. The child also saves up pocket money to contribute to some of the trips. This is in addition to the planned holidays for both children.

Children are supported to develop their independence, with consideration of their age and developmental needs. Children are encouraged to attend to their own personal needs and are involved with meal planning, choosing recipes and cooking meals, in a natural learning environment. Children receive pocket money, and staff talk to them about saving and spending money.

Staff are dedicated to involving children in all aspects of their lives, including choosing how the home is decorated. The children's bedrooms are personalised to their own tastes and interests. One child said, 'We talked about my bedroom, I

chose the colours and how I want it to look.' The environment feels welcoming like a family home, which helps children feel safe and relaxed.

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

The staff have an excellent understanding of the children's needs and are able to provide children with individualised care. Staff are nurturing, sensitive and non-judgmental, which enables children to feel safe and secure. Children can confidently share their thoughts and feelings. One child said, 'I talk to [name of manager] if I am unhappy, but if he's not here I can talk to any of them [staff]. I know they listen to me.'

Staff understand what to do when a child goes missing from home. They are proactive in searching to locate and contact the child. Staff work in close partnership with other professionals. The manager reviews all missing-from-home records and ensures that return home interviews are offered. This enables opportunities to understand the reasons why children go missing and reduce future occurrences.

Risk assessments are comprehensive and easily accessible. Risk management plans are reviewed regularly so that progress or emerging patterns can be identified. Staff refer to external agencies and use research to educate children about risks. Children are provided with consistent messages. The risks for one child, who previously had a history of self-harming, significantly reduced and are no longer a worry because of this.

Staff implement clear rules and boundaries, underpinned by an awareness of the effects of trauma. Children are actively involved in rewards and consequences, which help them understand the expectations. When children are emotionally struggling, staff remain calm and consistent. The in-house therapist offers advice to staff about how to respond to children's specific needs, using the PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) model of care. Children are helped to regulate their emotions, resulting in a reduction of unwanted behaviours.

Leaders and managers work effectively with partner agencies. When a concern about a member of staff came to light, they acted immediately to ensure the children's safety. The relevant authorities and professional bodies, including the local authority designated officer, were informed of the concerns. Staff are clear about procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of a child or young person.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The registered manager is qualified and supports the team and the children very effectively. They have high aspirations for staff and children to reach and exceed their potential. As a result, children are excited about opportunities in their life, and staff feel supported, motivated, enthusiastic and strive to provide the best possible care.

The manager is dedicated to ensuring that staff attend training opportunities. All mandatory training is up to date. Additional training is also encouraged, particularly in relation to gaps in staff learning or to support them in meeting children's specific needs. The manager recognises staff capabilities and advocates for staff progression. As a result, staff are enthusiastic to learn new skills and develop their knowledge, which is beneficial to the children.

The manager ensures that the interior of the home is maintained to a high standard. The home is immaculately presented inside. However, the patio in the garden needs some repairs to the concrete, which is cracked and growing weeds through.

There have been some staff changes since the last inspection. However, the manager successfully recruited new permanent staff with minimal impact on children. The manager negotiated with those staff leaving to stay beyond their notice period, so the new staff could be supported. A child's social worker said, 'Even though there have been some changes in staff, this doesn't seem to have affected [name of child]. I think because it's his home and he completely trusts [name of manager].'

The manager supports staff to have regular team meetings and supervision. This provides staff with opportunities to reflect on the children's progress and experiences and their own personal development. The manager encourages staff to work together collaboratively to improve practice and provide high standards of care to children.

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

### **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that outdoor space is well maintained and appropriate for children to play in safely. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

### **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:** 2634720

**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:** Amber Steib

**Registered manager:** Gavin Holmes

## Inspector

Sarah Probert, Social Care Inspector

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