

2767802

Registered provider: Sunbridge Childcare 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 provider. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home. The inspectors spoke to all four children at this inspection.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 July 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	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: 10 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children flourish because of the excellent support that they receive from a nurturing staff team. Staff are committed to improving the experiences of children in their care. Staff are good role models and adopt a parent-like approach in their daily interactions with children. The children develop positive relationships with the adults who care for them. Children trust them and tell them their biggest worries. One child said, 'I have made progress and feel safe because of the connections I have with adults.' Another child said, 'They never give up on me.'

Children's progress is exceptional from their individual starting points. Children build confidence in their ability to achieve, developing a strong sense of belonging. One child has gained the confidence to hold eye contact and remove their hood when around others, demonstrating significant improvements to their self-esteem and well-being. Staff celebrate and praise the children for their achievements. Staff know the importance of a child's identity and work has begun with children to map out their life story and journeys.

Education is encouraged and advocated for each child. As a result, all children are now attending school and further education, some for the first time in several years. The staff team uses innovative and creative ways to match children's interests to educational activities. This has been life changing for one child in particular, who is now ambitious to work with animals. The staff provide opportunities to develop the children's skills and talents, enriching the experiences that they have. For example, one child has written a poem about her experiences of living in the home, which is to be published.

Decisions for children moving in and out of the home are made with careful consideration. New children are welcomed into the home with warmth and sensitivity. There are extensive assessments that consider the impact of the new child on all children living in the home. The manager and her team show due diligence to ensure that decision-making is informed and in the best interest of all children. The manager and staff team do not give up on children. However, they recognise when a child needs alternative care to meet their specific needs. There is significant advocacy and planning to ensure that this is the right decision for the child.

The children are the essence of the home. The environment represents that of a lived-in, loving home. Children's pictures, achievements and creative work are displayed throughout the home. One child has created a memory jar, which is proudly displayed at the entrance of the home. One memory says, 'I am grateful. Staff showed me what a real home should be like.'

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

The staff team provides a warm, structured, and engaging environment where children feel supported and understood. The focus is on positive reinforcement, predictable

routines and natural consequences that help children to develop responsibility and self-regulation.

Staff are fully trained in de-escalation techniques and work closely with external professionals to continue to develop their knowledge. Behaviour management strategies are kept fun, playful and relaxed to reduce anxiety and promote engagement. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and only to keep children and others safe.

The manager is committed to maintaining excellent standards of safeguarding by continuously enhancing staff's knowledge through rigorous training, reflective supervision, interactive quizzes, and scenario-based learning. This results in a highly skilled team that can respond swiftly and effectively to safeguarding concerns.

There has been a significant reduction in missing-from-care incidents. One child who was frequently missing from home said, 'I come home every night because this is home.' The holistic support secures stability and improved positive well-being for children.

The staff understand each child's needs, experiences, and risks. Staff practice in the home is proactive. They are highly skilled in anticipating challenges and implementing measures to better protect children. Because of this, children who have previously been linked to antisocial behaviour in the community are no longer involved. One child now enjoys 'mate dates,' which involves friends coming to the home where they have fun.

Regular structured discussions with children allow staff and children to review progress, set new goals, and reflect on children's behaviour. Children have a greater awareness of how to keep themselves safer due to these supportive and sensitive chats, which help to establish trust to enable children to open up more to staff. For one child in particular, this level of trust is keeping them safer than they ever have been before.

Allegations are taken seriously and responded to appropriately. A recent allegation included multiple children and has been a complex situation. This has been managed sensitively, while ensuring children remain at the forefront. The response from leaders has been exceptional and a real drive for collaborative working to implement safety measures. This included changes within the home environment, supervision levels and activities inside and outside the home. One professional said, 'The team should be commended. Despite the turbulence, it is amazing to see how not giving up and collaborative working can keep children safe and can improve relations.' This is because of the manager challenging the work of other agencies and advocating for clear information-sharing for all children.

Staff speak to the children about bullying to ensure that they understand the signs and effects of these behaviours, and how these behaviours may have an impact on others. This proactive work helps the children to consider their actions towards others and helps to ensure a safe and harmonious home environment. When children raise any worries that they have about other children in the home, the response is quick. Mediation has

been completed, resulting in children repairing their relationships through validating each other's feelings in letter form.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers take time to get to know all children and what is happening in their lives. This is from a place of love, care, and the desire for children to flourish. The registered manager has created an ethos that reflects high expectations, high aspirations, and positivity. They are ambitious and dedicated to securing positive outcomes for children and are influential in changing children's lives for the better.

The registered manager is tenacious in advocating for children and ensuring that their voices are heard. She professionally challenges others in the best interest of children and the care that they receive. She provides evidence and offers solutions to any concerns, ensuring that children are always at the heart of decisions made regarding their care.

The register manager is enthusiastic in ensuring that staff are supported and appreciated, recognising the important role that they play in the home. Staff are confident and comfortable to approach managers for support in their practice and their personal life. The support provided by the managers enables staff to focus on providing excellent care for children. Staff are listened to, and their views and expertise are valued, contributing to the plans and the development of the care of children.

Relevant research linked to the needs of individual children has been sought by managers and implemented throughout the home. The manager recently completed a piece of work around adoption breakdown following children's journeys into the home. The staff are provided with protected time to enable a safe space to reflect and link this research to their practice. The research reflection enhances the nurturing care provided to children. In this example, the team has highlighted patterns and trends linked to all children in care.

There are currently changes being made to how documents are stored from paper-based records to electronic records. During this transition period, there have been small discrepancies in the recording of documentation. Streamlining documents and more detailed recording would benefit staff, providing clearer reflection of incidents and more transparency in the direction of staff.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2767802

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sunbridge Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: 3 Hedley Court, North Shields, Tyne & Wear NE29 7ST

Responsible individual: Paul Lundie

Registered manager: Charlotte O'Neil

Inspectors

Sarah McGow, Social Care Inspector

Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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