

2769106

Registered provider: Sunbridge Childcare Limited

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.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2023.

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

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 August 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: 7 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/05/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are thriving because they are cared for by an established and nurturing staff team. Staff provide children with a stable and loving home and use a therapeutic parenting approach. Children experience high-quality care, with consistent and predictable routines. Managers and staff are focused on the children's well-being and best interests. Staff have excellent relationships with the children and speak about them in the highest regard. There is a genuine sense of warmth and of the adults and children being a 'family.'

Children are happy and settled and make excellent progress from their starting points. All the children have made exceptional progress in their education. Children are excelling in their education placements, some of which are bespoke to their needs and circumstances. As a result, there has been a significant improvement in children's attendance and engagement. The commitment from the team to help children to engage in education is commendable. For example, the team continued to provide daily transport and emotional support for one child who recently moved out of the home. This contributed to the child completing their exams and securing a further education placement.

Children's worlds have been expanded due to the encouragement by staff. For example, one child shared their written literature about their past experiences. The staff recognised the child's talent and because of this, external agencies have deemed it worthy of wider dissemination. The child now aspires to continue on this pathway and help other care-experienced children.

The children's engagement with the local community, charities and wider partners is inspirational. Children have actively supported a local donkey sanctuary; they have raised money for charity and delivered hampers to their local hospice. As a result, children enjoy a strong sense of local connection, which benefits their developing sense of self and their self-esteem.

Children's days are filled with joy and excitement, and this is underpinned by the relationships that they have with staff. Children enjoy spending time with each other and with staff. Due to the quality of relationships, children are sensitive to each other's likes and dislikes and develop empathy. Consequently, children are now learning how to understand feelings better and how responses can contribute to building and maintaining positive relationships.

Children are supported to see their families. Staff help them with this, recognising the difficult feelings that may arise for children at times. Staff use effective planning to make sure that children have a good experience. They are persistent and sensitive in their support for families. For some children, this has resulted in reconnecting with siblings for the first time in many years. Furthermore, the staff create memories in books for

children when their families are not around them, and they created a memorial garden for one child who has experienced significant loss.

Staff understand the importance of friendships for the children's social and emotional development. For some children this includes going on shopping trips and experiencing sleepovers for the first time. Children's friends are encouraged to visit the home and are welcomed warmly by the staff, promoting an inclusive environment. One child enjoyed having their friend visit for pancake night; making arts and crafts which are now proudly displayed in the home. One child said, 'I am doing things now that would never have previously been possible.'

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

The ethos of the home is one of a family environment. Children are at the centre of all decisions. Staff encourage positive behaviour, kindness and respect. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and understand the impact of a child's past experiences. Staff are competent in using the home's therapeutic approach to de-escalate situations. As a result, incidents of unwanted behaviour are rare.

Staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to explore highly sensitive topics with the children. Staff consistently help children to identify how they are feeling and provide them with a range of tools, such as self-soothe boxes and journals. Because of this, children are now comfortable sharing their emotions. Children have improved resilience and are better equipped with safer strategies to cope with difficult feelings.

Staff's safeguarding practice means that all children have a strong sense of safety and well-being in this home. If a child expresses a wish, staff are quick to act on it and find safe ways for it to happen. For example, the children recently enjoyed a group holiday together for the first time.

Staff excel at putting boundaries and expectations in place for children, which, in turn, makes them feel safe and secure. This allows children to take positive risks and experience new things in life. Consequently, children do not go missing from home, instead they enjoy playing out with their friends and returning home on time. For one child in particular this has been life changing. One child said, 'For the first time in my life, I feel safe and look forward to going to bed every night.'

Children have access to a range of primary and specialist health care professionals, who also offer specialist advice and guidance to staff. Regular discussions have taken place with the children about emotional health, relationships and sexual health matters. Children benefit from these interventions, which helps them to manage their emotions and improve their lifestyles. For one child, the care, support and guidance from the staff, in partnership with other professionals, is helping them to make life-changing plans.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

An experienced manager and an equally knowledgeable deputy manager lead the home. Together, they have successfully embedded a culture of positive regard and aspirational practice. This has resulted in exceptional changes to children's lives. The staff carry this vision too and children learn to believe that they can achieve anything. The shared vision for the home can be clearly seen in the children's day-to-day living.

The manager is always visible and regularly works with the children directly. Children enjoy spending time with her. The manager has a detailed understanding of each child and is fully involved in their care planning from the outset. This allows the manager to not only build strong relationships with the children, but also to model her style and strategies to support staff in their learning and development.

The manager and staff aspire for the children to do well. The manager knows the strengths and areas to develop in the home. Together, the manager and staff are on a journey of continual reflection and improvement. They know the children's starting points, their motivators and challenges, and commit to working through difficulties with them. One child said, 'They never give up on me, I know that this is home, no matter what.'

The management team provides high-quality support and supervision to the team. The manager continuously develops her own skills and those of her team. Team meetings are interactive, child-focused and solution focused. There is an open and honest culture that promotes the message that there is always room for learning and development. Staff training and input from therapists equip staff with a trauma-informed approach to meeting children's needs.

The home has excellent working relationships with partner agencies, which ensures the best possible care, experiences and futures for children. A professional involved with a child said, 'There is absolutely nothing [name of manager] and her staff would not do for [name of child].'

The manager listens actively to the children. Their views are valued, and children contribute to their care planning and decisions. They are encouraged to speak up and shape all areas of life in the home. The manager confidently advocates for the children and challenges professionals when necessary. The manager has been tenacious in advocating for one child in respect of the local authority's care planning. The manager goes above and beyond, for example securing legal support and advocacy for children to further champion their voice.

The staff praise the support and guidance that they receive from leaders. There is a consensus among staff that leaders take an interest in their well-being and development. They are encouraged to take pride in their work, which makes them feel appreciated.

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: 2769106

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sunbridge Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual: Paul Lundie

Registered manager: Rachael Marley

Inspectors

Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector
Sarah McGow, Social Care Inspector

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