

1223681

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four girls at any given time who are experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 6 March 2018

Judgement at last inspection: Good

Date of last inspection: 8 May 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

Staff have the proven ability to develop sound, trusting relationships with young people, which makes them feel safe, loved and valued. The staff also provide a warm and particularly nurturing environment with clear routines and boundaries. Meal times are relaxed, social occasions. Consequently, this is a happy, relaxed home where young people feel safe and secure to explore their intense emotions and develop strategies to manage their behaviours and build resilience.

One young person who recently moved into this home, is already feeling safe and comfortable, despite this being her first experience of residential care. Comments from young people include, 'I really enjoy living here. I like the meals which I choose and the activities on offer', and 'I feel safe here. The staff look after me well. They spend time

with me, listen and talk to me.'

Gradual and sensitive admission and discharge processes ensure smooth transitions. This enables young people to settle quickly into their new placements. Since the last inspection, one young person was moved to a smaller home, at her request, because she was struggling with group living, which was negatively impacting on the other young people. Lessons were learned from this challenging few months and, in particular, the importance of strengthening their matching processes. In response, a more robust impact risk assessment was produced prior to the next admission. This considered the needs, risks and views of the young person already living in the home and that of the young person referred.

Significant work also took place with the young people to aid their understanding of bullying and to prevent this behaviour from re-occurring in the home. This culminated in young people producing their own anti-bullying contracts. One young person wrote, 'Bullying is not acceptable here and I will speak out if it happens because I know staff are always here to help.'

Good evaluation by the manager shows an initial deterioration in one young person's behaviours following any new admission. This is managed well. During such periods, the few restraints used are the least restrictive recognised holds and for the shortest duration until everyone's safety is assured. One young person said, 'I have been held to stop me hurting someone or causing damage, but staff have never hurt me.' One parent said, 'I have noticed a huge improvement in my daughter's behaviour.'

Good staffing ratios at all times ensure that young people benefit from highly individualised care. This experienced staff team is also strong and effective advocates and will not hesitate to challenge other stakeholders on young people's behalf. Examples include a successful appeal to the Secretary of State to enable one young person to attend the school of her choice, and lodging a formal complaint to the police in respect of their behaviour management.

All the young people enjoy regular contact with significant family members and previous carers in line with any legal restrictions and personal preferences. This positively promotes young people's sense of identity. One young person said, 'I like spending time with my family, especially my mum.'

Furthermore, staff work particularly well with parents, valuing and respecting their views on key decisions about their child's care. Comments from relatives include, 'I am very pleased with how my daughter is being cared for and that she is now safe. She is much happier. Staff always let me know what is happening', 'My child is in a safe environment that I'm happy with', and 'My sister is safe because she no longer runs away.'

The incidents of young people going missing have significantly reduced since their moving to this home. For example, one young person who was frequently missing prior to admission, has had four episodes in the last 15 months and none since May 2017. Consequently, the previously high risk of child sexual exploitation has also reduced. One

young person said, 'I really appreciate how much the staff care about my safety.'

The appropriate use of restorative justice effectively avoids young people being unnecessarily criminalised, yet they are still helped to understand that there are consequences to all behaviours.

A key strength of this home is the staff team's confidence and competence to enable young people to take age-appropriate risks as part of their development into adulthood. Examples include, the exploration of their developing sexuality and enjoying free time in the community with their friends. Individual risks are clearly understood, and timely and relevant direct work is frequently undertaken to help them to stay safe.

All the young people are receiving education and making good progress academically and behaviourally compared to their starting points. One young person, who struggled in school, is now blossoming in college and has made lots of friends. Extracts from other recent school reports include, 'This pupil's conduct, behaviour, effort and engagement [are] good. She completes work to best of her ability and is enthusiastic. She works well with others and contributes to class discussions', and 'This young person is making massive progress with her education and it is notable that she is happier.'

There are good arrangements in place to promote healthy lifestyles. Young people benefit from homemade nutritious meals and plenty of physical exercise. Personal hygiene has significantly improved in this home, which has markedly improved self-esteem. Improved sleep patterns have also directly resulted in improved behaviours.

Staff ensure that relevant specialist services are provided in a timely manner to help meet young people's more complex needs. For example, one young person engages weekly with an alcohol misuse worker. This was an addiction formed prior to her admission. Her intake has significantly reduced, which has had a positive impact on her safety, physical health, behaviours and emotional well-being.

Young people's emotional needs are well met. They particularly benefit from weekly therapy at the home. Since the last inspection, a separate and dedicated therapy room has been built. The therapist confirmed meaningful engagement from all the girls and good progress from their individual starting points. She has also recently introduced a 'therapeutic support' document. This provides individualised strategies for staff to use and thereby positively build on her sessions with the young people.

Self-injurious behaviours have reduced in frequency and severity at this home through the creative use of art, distraction boxes and journaling. Moreover, because staff have a very good understanding of individual triggers, they can prepare well and safely manage any lapses.

An ongoing programme of redecoration and refurbishment means that this spacious home is always maintained to a high standard throughout. Since the last inspection, young people's bedrooms have been redecorated to their personal tastes and they now all have double beds. New sofas have also been purchased for the lounge. Currently, the

young people are using their artistic skills to decorate their new gaming room. One young person said, 'It's a beautiful home and I love my bedroom. I've now got a big glittery mirror that matches my lava lamp.'

There is a particularly good range of genuine opportunities for young people to positively influence their day-to-day lives. They are also involved in the development of the service. In particular, they recently designed questions, identified attributes they were looking for in any staff member, and interviewed applicants. Examples included, 'Have you got a good sense of humour?' 'What activities do you do?' 'Are you a good cook?' and, 'Why should you get this job?' One young person judged their answers as OK, good or amazing and then chose to inform the successful candidate by telephone. These processes provide excellent opportunities for developing social skills and confidence building, which are essential for future success.

There are also good opportunities in place for all the young people to develop age- and ability-appropriate practical skills to prepare them for future independent living. They all particularly enjoy cooking and every week make a full evening meal for the staff. This is another indicator of the excellent relationships established at this home.

Young people benefit from frequently taking part in a wide range of stimulating and constructive activities. Individual interests and talents are actively encouraged and supported, which strengthens self-esteem and competencies. Current examples include animal welfare, singing, drama, creative writing and football. Moreover, one young person was recently formally recognised at an official ceremony by her placing authority for her outstanding talent in photography. Another young person frequently takes part in public musicals, which demonstrates the confidence she has gained at this home. She said, 'I go to a drama group twice a week. I am in the school choir and I'm a peer mentor. I am also starring in the school musical. I'm now applying to be the local carnival queen and head girl at school.'

To this end, she independently wrote an excellent application form highlighting her 'very flamboyant and confident personality... caring nature and big heart' and detailed her many relevant talents and achievements. This includes winning the bravery award at school for 'standing up when things get tough'.

Since the last inspection, young people have thoroughly enjoyed two holidays. One was abroad and they are already looking forward to another holiday abroad in the next summer holidays. These have been specifically chosen to meet particular preferences. Two young people have chosen an all-inclusive holiday where they intend to relax and sunbathe every day and are learning Arabic in preparation. The other two young people are going on a fun-filled activity holiday.

Religious interests are actively promoted. One young person has requested to be baptised and to this end is now regularly attending Church and volunteers as a Sunday school teacher. Furthermore, she has asked the manager to be one of her godparents, which demonstrates the special relationship they have established.

It is to the young people's credit that they choose to positively contribute to the local community, which serves to strengthen their strong sense of belonging. Examples include providing quality time to residents of a local nursing home, contributing to a food bank and taking part in events to raise money for chosen charities. One young person has independently completed all the necessary paperwork to be an organ donor.

The manager of this home has been successfully registered with Ofsted since the last inspection. She is a child-focused individual who leads by example. She also has an accurate understanding of the many strengths of this home and areas for continued development. Her deputy is a qualified social worker with very good organisational skills. Together, they provide clear direction and good support to the staff.

Consequently, morale is high and staff said they genuinely look forward to coming to work, describing it as 'home from home'. They confirm regular good-quality supervision, timely appraisals and good opportunities for ongoing training and internal promotion. Since the last inspection, they also benefit from 'reflective practice' sessions following an incident aiming to constantly improve their practice.

Notifications of significant events are forwarded to Ofsted in a timely manner, with regular updates, until a satisfactory conclusion is reached. These demonstrate effective partnership working with a range of relevant stakeholders to safeguard all the young people and promote their welfare. They also detail appropriate and agreed strategies to try to prevent a re-occurrence.

Placing authorities are consistently highly satisfied with the quality of care provided at this home and the consequent good progress all the young people are making. Recent comments include: 'This home is so welcoming. The skilled and experienced staff have built good relationships with all the children and my young person is thriving'; 'My young person has made significant progress with her education and she is effectively safeguarded at this home'; 'My young person is very settled and doing great. She has excellent relationships with the staff team and they provide a supportive and nurturing environment'; 'The progress reports I receive are very detailed and any issues are addressed promptly'; 'The home works well with outside agencies and placing social workers to achieve the best outcomes for the young people who live at the home'; and 'I think this is a great home with fantastic facilities and great staff. It is a safe place for any young person to live, grow and mature into adulthood.'

Robust internal and external monitoring of this homes is well established, and any regulatory shortfalls identified are immediately addressed. Consequently, there were no requirements or recommendations raised at the last full inspection or following this interim inspection.

Records in the home are well maintained. The introduction of participation files and memory books since the last inspection provides permanent, photographic reminders for each young person, of all their unique positive experiences and progress made while living at this home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/05/2017	Full	Good
08/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: 1223681

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 49 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: Lee Prescott

Registered manager: Debbie Waddington

Inspector

Lynn O'Driscoll, social care inspector

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