

1184093

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to three children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides care for children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties or learning difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2017.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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: 27 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2020	Full	Good
06/02/2019	Full	Good
07/11/2017	Full	Good
18/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are making exceptional progress in all aspects of their social, physical, emotional and behavioural development from their initial starting points. Children receive consistent care from a stable team of experienced staff who provide a supportive and nurturing environment. As a result, children develop trusting relationships with staff where they feel safe and can thrive.

Children move into and out of the home in a planned way. Children currently living in the home have all lived there for over 18 months. For some children, this stability has come following a number of different placements. Children have developed a clear sense of belonging, which is helping them to feel settled and make positive choices in their lives.

Extremely positive relationships between staff and children were observed during this inspection. Individual staff know children well. One child said, 'Everything is nice and chilled. The staff are nice and are always there for you.'

Children live in a homely environment, and photos of the children are on display throughout the home. Children were proud to show the inspectors their bedrooms which they had decorated to their own individual tastes. There is a warm and homely atmosphere. As a result, children are happy and making progress. However, the home's internal doors have locks on them. Although the children and registered manager told the inspectors that these doors are not locked, they detract from the otherwise homely feel of the property.

Children enjoy their individual interests and passions, including music, army cadets and various football clubs. This not only supports children with their physical health but has also boosted their confidence and self-esteem. This is significant progress for one child, who had previously been unable to participate in group activities. The achievements and awards children have gained are celebrated by the entire staff team.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff team has worked effectively and ensured that children continue to have fun and make progress. Children described their experience of the pandemic as having 'silver linings', as they developed new routines and strengthened their existing positive relationships with the staff team. Children have maintained these interests since restrictions have been eased, as they enjoy this quality time with individual staff.

All children are now attending education, which is significant progress for individual children. Staff work closely with teachers and educational professionals to ensure that the arrangements in place support children to progress. These arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure that children achieve their full potential. One

educational professional said, 'Staff are amazing with children and the support they give is second to none.'

Staff work in partnership with other professionals to ensure that children receive the support they need to progress. This means that children are able to make sense of their past experiences and envisage their futures in a positive way. Social workers are positive about the exceptional care that children receive and the significant impact this is having on children's progress. One social worker said, 'I have seen significant progress in [name of child]'s development, stability and maturity since being cared for at this home.'

Children are registered with the health services that they need to help them be healthy. Staff support them to attend all routine health and medical appointments. In addition, children have developed meaningful relationships with the home's therapist. Staff work enthusiastically with the therapist to support the work she is doing with the children. They ensure that this is woven throughout their daily interactions in the home. Children's emotional health and well-being have significantly improved since coming to live here. This is a key strength of this service.

Children are supported to keep in touch with their family and the people who are significant to them. This has been a challenge for staff to develop and support children. This is due to the complex relationships between children and their families. Staff have established an excellent understanding of children's often complex family dynamics and the impact of these relationships for children. The staff work flexibly to ensure that these relationships are safe and beneficial for children.

Children have a strong voice in the home and are consulted on all aspects of their care. This is achieved through informal conversations, formal meetings, key-work sessions and questionnaires. Staff know how best to get children to open up and talk. This may be by taking children for a drive, going for an evening 'power walk' or going on walks to the beach to watch the sunset. One member of staff told inspectors, 'Over time, we have learned so much about each other, grown together and all know each other so well.'

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

The safety and well-being of children are at the centre of staff's practice. Staff have a thorough understanding of children's individual needs and vulnerabilities. Children's risk management plans detail the risks posed to children. Clear and consistent strategies are identified for staff to follow to minimise these risks and keep children safe. Plans are reviewed and updated following any incident, which ensures that they contain the most up-to-date information.

Staff are proactive and effective in identifying, understanding and managing risks, and they work closely with involved professionals. There is a strong emphasis on the work that is undertaken with children living in this home. This work is successful

because of the respect and depth of relationships staff have with children. The work carried out includes highly effective key-work sessions, online training and, for one child, work with a mentor around their key areas of risk. The meaningful work undertaken with children has ensured that identified risks are reducing. The children are developing a good understanding of risk and are learning to make better choices.

Children told inspectors that they feel safe living in this home. Something that was echoed by professionals. One professional said, 'What is clear is that [name of child] feels safe. This has allowed him to feel happy.'

Children get on well together and are encouraged to accept difference. This means that any disagreements are quickly resolved. Children know how to make a complaint, although none have been made since the last inspection. Children say that they feel confident that if they did need to raise a concern, it would be treated seriously.

Behaviour management strategies in place for children are effective and well understood. Children benefit from consistent routines and boundaries. One child identified positive changes in their behaviour and told inspectors that this was because the rules and boundaries in place are 'right for him'. This, along with the additional therapeutic support children receive, has supported children to make excellent progress in managing their feelings and behaviour.

Children are well settled in this home and trust the staff who care for them. The positive relationships between children and staff mean that staff are able to de-escalate most incidents of challenging behaviour. As a result, the need for staff to physically intervene to safely manage children's behaviour has significantly reduced. Records clearly demonstrate the strategies used to de-escalate incidents and follow-up support provided to the child and staff. However, there were shortfalls in the recording of one incident due to issues with the home's electronic recording system. The provider has since taken steps to address this issue.

Sanctions are rarely used in this home. When required, they are done in collaboration with children to ensure that they are most effective. Restorative practice is used with excellent results to help children to reflect and learn from any inappropriate behaviours.

Since the last inspection, there have been no incidents of children going missing from this home. This is because children feel safe here and want to be at this home. Staff spoken to have a clear understanding of the protocols in place to keep children safe. Effective individual plans are in place for staff to follow in the event children do go missing from the home.

Children have safe and age-appropriate access to the internet. Staff support children to understand the risks associated with all forms of social media. Staff are consistent in applying the rules of safe internet use and have addressed any identified concerns appropriately.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He is a committed role model for staff and the children in his care. He leads by example and is passionate about supporting children to achieve positive outcomes, which is an ethos shared by the staff team. The registered manager is aspirational for all children living in this home. He ensures that they have happy experiences and live in an environment that supports them to flourish.

The registered manager is supported by a team of staff who share the same high aspirations for children. Feedback from staff is exceptionally positive and confirms a real sense of teamworking. One member of staff said that the home is a great environment to work in and described the manager as 'really supportive'. Staff demonstrate resilience when managing challenging situations. One social worker said, 'They stuck with [name of child] and worked through it.' This means that children know they can rely on the staff, who care for them despite any difficulties they face.

Staff receive regular, reflective supervision and an annual performance appraisal. The registered manager is keen to support the career development of those who work in this home. This helps to motivate staff, who demonstrate a commitment to working in the home. The consistency of the staff team reflects this.

Staff speak enthusiastically about the training available to them to support them in their role. They say that training has given them a better understanding of the home's model of care. The organisation's therapist regularly reviews the progress children are making and ensures that staff know how to target their interactions with children most effectively. This wraparound approach is supporting children to make exceptional progress and thrive. All staff have completed mandatory training. Additionally, staff have undertaken specialist training that enables them to meet the specific needs of the children effectively.

The registered manager takes positive steps to gather the views of children, families, social workers and other professionals about the quality of care provided by the home and takes effective action to respond to these. He makes positive use of the home's internal and external monitoring systems.

The registered manager understands the plans for all of the children. He ensures that children have a real sense of stability in this home, while preparing them for their future in accordance with their plans. Staff implement this same philosophy in working with the children.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that internal door locks are removed so that the home maintains a domestic rather than an institutional impression. ('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: 1184093

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Limited

Registered provider address: Sandcastle Care Limited, 49 Whitegate Drive,
Blackpool FY3 9DG

Responsible individual: Steven Lambert

Registered manager: Matthew Livingstone

Inspectors

Genevieve O'Reilly, Social Care Inspector
Claire Hobbs, Social Care Inspector

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