

1231399

Registered provider: Sandcastle Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 October 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2023	Full	good
15/03/2022	Full	good
12/03/2020	Full	good
05/12/2018	Full	outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff know the children well and work hard to build trusting relationships with them. These relationships provide the foundation for the children to flourish. Children who move out of the home experience planned moves in line with their individual plans. Children's wishes and feelings inform their plans and staff support children to prepare for their move. For example, staff supported one child to order all of her furniture and essential items for her new home. Staff celebrate with children when they move out of the home. This enables children to experience positive endings to their time in the home.

Children are in good health. Staff understand children's individual health needs and ensure that children attend routine health appointments. Staff have high aspirations for children and encourage them with their education. All of the children are engaged in education. One child who attends college spoke to the inspector about their aspirations to have a career in law enforcement.

Staff work closely with the home's therapist to meet the children's emotional needs. The therapist told the inspector that the children feel able to share their feelings with staff and said, 'Children are the heart of the team; their [the staff's] common goal is what is best for the children.' The therapist provides individual support for the children, and both children told the inspector that this is helpful to them.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities, including horse riding and singing lessons. This helps children's confidence and enables them to pursue their own interests. Staff encourage children to contribute to local charities. This develops the children's connections with their local community and develops their empathy. Staff capture children's experiences in memory books. These serve as a powerful reminder for the children of their positive memories while living in this home.

Children's views are sought regularly and acted on. Both children told the inspector that they feel staff take their views seriously. This supports children to contribute to decisions made about their care. However, the children do not know how to make a complaint.

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

Staff have a clear understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Staff have created a culture in which there is a conscientious approach to keeping children safe. Children told the inspector that they feel safe, and that they can share any worries they have with trusted adults who care for them.

Children's plans do not provide staff with clarity around what steps to take to keep children safe. This does not support new staff to keep the children safe. This has not negatively impacted on the children because there has been an established staff

team that knows the children well. The interim manager has requested support from leaders to strengthen children's plans.

Children who are missing from home experience well-coordinated responses from staff to locate them quickly. When children return home, they are offered independent return home interviews. The staff work closely with external professionals to understand the reasons why children go missing from home and put into place plans to keep children safe.

Staff undertake direct work with children to enable children to understand their own needs, and steps they can take to keep themselves safe. Boundaries for children are clear, and children are rewarded for positive behaviour. Children are enabled to take risks in line with their individual abilities. This has included supporting children to develop their independence, for example independent travel. This helps children to develop their self-awareness, confidence and social skills.

The children live in a safe environment that is spacious and welcoming.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There has not been a registered manager in post since 29 September 2023. The interim manager had a thorough handover with the registered manager and has established relationships with the children and staff. This has supported a seamless change in management. The interim manager has a thorough understanding of the children's individual needs. The interim manager showed the inspector that he is completing his application to register with Ofsted.

Staff said that they enjoy working in the home and they feel supported by the management team. Staff access regular supervisions and team meetings. This enables them to contribute to decisions about changes in practice and understand children's evolving needs. Staff access a range of training that gives them the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the children.

Four staff members have left the home since the last inspection. The interim manager identified that this was because of organisational changes. The interim manager ensures that there are enough staff working in the home to meet the needs of the children. Recruitment to fill staff vacancies is ongoing.

The interim manager has developed positive working relationships with external professionals and contributes to multi-agency meetings that inform children's plans. One social worker said that the interim manager shares information routinely, which supports an understanding of their child's experiences.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff make children aware of the complaints procedure and remind them of this, as necessary. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)
- The registered person should ensure that children's individual plans include details of the steps the staff will take to keep the children safe. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: 1231399

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: David Lahey

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sally Griffiths, Social Care Inspector

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