

2514259

Registered provider: Solent Child Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a small private company. It is registered to provide care for two children. According to the home's statement of purpose, the objective of the home is to provide ongoing, intensive, individual attention, stability and support to children who have experienced disrupted developmental trauma and multiple placement moves.

At the time of inspection, there were two children living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since 19 April 2023.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 March 2024

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2023	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
24/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home environment is immaculate, with a homely feel and look. The home is well maintained and decorated to a high standard. Children's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their individuality well. Staff show kindness and warmth towards the children and each other. This contributes towards the homely environment and the supportive team culture. There are warm interactions between children and staff, and children are treated with dignity and respect.

The home provides individualised care and support to the children, including helping them to develop independent living skills when appropriate to do so. This helps the children to become more independent as they grow and helps them to build their confidence and achieve best outcomes.

Staff have a clear understanding of both children's backgrounds and current needs. Through getting to know the children, they have learned ways that work well to support them to become calm when showing signs of distress. Key-work sessions enable staff and children to have meaningful conversations about important issues and help to strengthen relationships.

Plans and risk assessments are comprehensive and give a great insight into the children's needs and risks and how these are to be managed to ensure their safety and well-being. Records show the ongoing work to support children to recognise their feelings and to make better choices, to stand them in good stead in the future and help them to build and maintain relationships, particularly with peers.

Incidents are well managed. Staff appropriately attempt to de-escalate situations through a patient approach; they use verbal reassurance and distraction techniques and have only used physical intervention as a last resort. Physical intervention, when used, has been reasonable, proportionate and necessary. All reports are shared with the placing authority to ensure transparency and best practice. Support for the child post-incident is delivered in an empathetic way, giving the child the opportunity to reflect on the incident itself and how they were feeling at the time. The culture of the home is one of always learning, wanting to improve and understanding how they can all do things better next time.

The manager's review of incident reports is reflective. The manager takes account of potential triggers for children and provides guidance to staff on adapting their approach in line with children's needs.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are gained in a number of ways, including children's meetings, one-to-one sessions and in everyday practice. Activities are discussed and the children can choose what they want to do.

The children's memory books are updated every day. They are intended to be of value to the children as they grow up and to give them a sense of belonging and of their achievements being celebrated.

Children's healthcare needs are managed very well. Clear documentation helps to ensure that the children's medication is administered safely, and there is close liaison with external agencies and healthcare professionals, so the children are receiving the most informed care.

The manager models effective, proactive and consistent collaboration with external professionals. This has resulted in excellent partnership working to provide the best outcomes for children.

One social worker spoke very highly of the care and support provided to their child and, in particular, how the staff are very passionate about the care of the children, and how the children talk fondly of the adults as being their 'extended family'. Communication was also praised, along with how staff seek to prevent challenging situations from escalating for each child by knowing the children very well and what they need in that moment.

The children are attending full-time education and are progressing well, with exceptionally high attendance. Comments from school staff were 'The home has been incredibly good at promoting a team around the child approach to planning transitions and preparing for upcoming events,' and, 'The children speak highly of the adults and adults are always warm towards the child when collecting and dropping off from school and are eager to share and celebrate the child's success.'

Family time is both supported and encouraged. Staff listen to the children and observe their behaviours before and after family time and liaise with other professionals such as therapists and those in schools. One family member noted that their child is 'doing really well, fantastic, and has changed completely from when they arrived. I cannot ask for any more really. They are doing a superb job.'

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

Staff understand the risks and vulnerabilities of the children and respond to any concerns swiftly. They work in accordance with safeguarding policies and procedures and escalate any relevant concerns to professional networks, including the police and other specialist services, to provide children with wraparound care and support.

Strategies to help to keep children safe are clearly set out in children's individual support plans, which are reviewed frequently. Furthermore, children are supported to identify their own behaviours and triggers, and detailed safety plans include information on how staff can support them to feel safe.

Knowledgeable staff can explain the processes and procedures to be used when a child discloses a concern or makes an allegation. All necessary action and

appropriate steps are taken, in a child-focused and timely manner. This ensures that the child remains the focus and priority of staff.

Accidents and injuries are recorded accurately and in a timely manner. This ensures that the health and safety of staff and children in the home are recorded and acted on without delay.

Incidents are well managed and reports clearly show staff being able to verbally de-escalate challenging situations. Care plans, risks assessments and behaviour support plans, which include input from the children, identify how best to support each child for each potential risk. Reviews with the children post-incident are thorough, reflective and honest and staff support the children to make different decisions, to reduce incidents in the future.

Staff support the children to build and maintain their relationships with each other, including strategies such as using 'Tommy the talking spoon' to restore and repair relationships when the children have disagreements. Children are learning social skills to benefit them now and in maintaining relationships in future.

Staff are appropriately trained and they are able to incorporate their training and knowledge into daily practice. This helps to ensure that children are cared for consistently by experienced and informed staff.

Staff treat the children with respect and understanding, according to their individual needs and experiences. Staff provide consistent boundaries and transparency in their practice. This enables the children to feel safe and to understand the consequences of their actions.

The company has safer recruiting procedures which are mostly being followed. However, not all files demonstrate that all necessary steps have been taken with regard to receiving feedback from previous employers related to working with children.

Health and safety arrangements in the home are effective. Any maintenance requirements are quickly resolved, and the manager ensures that the home is maintained to a high standard. However, fire drills have not been carried out with the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Managers know the children very well. The registered manager has a range of monitoring systems that identify strengths and improvements effectively. Weekly monitoring enables comprehensive oversight by the senior leadership team and helps them to implement changes efficiently.

Leaders have recently introduced a new mentoring and development manager who will support the interim manager in her role and will contribute to the care of the children.

Leaders and managers are aware of where practice needs to improve, in particular with recruitment challenges and the impact this has had on their ability to carry out the managerial element of their roles.

The use of bedroom door alarms, while intended to help the children to feel safe, has not been regularly reviewed with the placing authorities.

Staff feel very well supported by the manager. One member of staff has been supported to progress to a senior post. The managers ensure that the staff receive regular supervision and that team meetings are held regularly, which result in a high standard of care continuing to be provided to the children. The in-house clinical psychologist plays an integral part in supporting the staff team to support the children, using a trauma-informed approach. Senior leaders are also proactive in regularly visiting the home and supporting the managers.

The managers are clearly committed to enhancing staff practice to ensure the best outcomes for the children. Additionally, the manager reviews key-work reports and incident reports, evaluating actions taken by staff and providing guidance on anything that could have been done differently.

The manager recognises the importance of working in partnership with health and education services, social care professionals and therapists to meet children's needs in all areas and this is resulting in consistent care at home and at school for both children.

The manager has ensured that the children's understanding of diversity is promoted. They are open to discussing equality and diversity in the home and have taken opportunities to discuss this as and when it arises. This gives the children the opportunity to learn about and celebrate differences in society.

Managers and staff have high expectations for the team and are ambitious about children's futures. They speak passionately about providing a good quality of care and working with children to unlock their potential.

Staff ensure that children have positive experiences. They provide children with routine, set boundaries, spend time talking to the children and show an interest in their hobbies and interests.

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

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene, etc); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. Health and safety procedures should ensure that children know what to do in the event of a fire. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. This is in relation to the use of the door alarms and keeping them under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2514259

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Solent Child Care Limited

Registered provider address: 9 St Georges Yard, Castle Street, Farnham, Surrey
GU9 7LW

Responsible individual: Kirsty Sheppard

Registered manager: Nicholas Tiller

Inspector

Emma Haskell, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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