

# SC063259

Registered provider: SES Avocet Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The privately owned home offers a therapeutic model of care. The home provides long-term placements for up to eight children who have difficulties managing their emotions and may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse. There is a registered school on site that is also run by the organisation. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2021.

### Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 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:** 1 September 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
01/09/2021	Full	Good
03/03/2020	Full	Outstanding
27/02/2019	Full	Outstanding
10/05/2017	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

At the time of this inspection, seven children were living at the home.

Children thrive and have a strong sense of stability, and enjoy extremely fulfilling day-to-day experiences. This stability provides children with a secure base, enabling them to make exceptional progress from their starting points. The skilled and ambitious staff provide high-quality, individualised and nurturing support which significantly enhances children's quality of life and future life chances.

Children enjoy a diverse range of enriching activities and lead very active and healthy lifestyles. All children attend a variety of exciting local clubs that match their interests. Some children excel in their selected hobbies, including one child who qualified for a national fencing competition and also won a recent community chess tournament. Other children have enjoyed holidays abroad, including to Spain and France, and a trip to Wales. Staff have been instrumental in researching opportunities and linking with the local and wider community to ensure that children have life-changing experiences. These experiences greatly improve children's self-determination, sense of community and well-being.

Children are supported to make considerable progress with their learning. One child who had not been attending school before they moved to the home is now attending every day. This child has made progress in a short time to the extent that they were able to take advantage of a recent foreign exchange opportunity. This was extremely valued by the child. The staff work seamlessly with school staff to provide personalised academic and vocational education through informal learning. Individualised learning timetables and effective communication between staff have resulted in children making academic progress that is meaningful for them. The success of staff's support means that children who have previously found it difficult to engage in learning are now flourishing.

Children have excellent support from staff to build their independence and daily living skills. Innovative approaches, including a well-devised achievement programme, are tailored to children's individual milestones. Children are supported to obtain employment and work experience which match their career aspirations. Children are involved in planning fundraising events for local causes. One child's overall progress and recent achievements have been nationally recognised at an awards ceremony. The wide range of opportunities and staff support enable children to excel and to experience appropriate responsibility. Consequently, children hold valued roles in their community and are well prepared for adult living.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are a high priority. For one child, the staff have worked very effectively and sensitively to support them to overcome their

anxieties around attending health appointments. This has ensured that the child has received the help that they need.

The home is equipped and decorated to a high standard. Children gave excellent feedback about the pride in their spacious and personalised bedrooms. Photos, certificates and trophies relating to children's recent achievements are displayed around the home helping children to develop a sense of family values and belonging. However, elements of deep cleaning could be improved to ensure that it is consistently welcoming and homely.

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

Children feel safe and are kept safe by staff who understand the risks to them. There is a culture of high aspiration and regard among staff for every child. Mutually respectful and strong relationships with staff help the children to feel safe and unconditionally accepted. As a result, children begin to reflect on the past, build resilience in respect of previous trauma and develop an understanding of how to manage their own emotions.

The children benefit from an extensive range of interventions, including support from a consultant systemic psychologist and a consultant psychiatrist. The staff work from a highly-informed model of care. Children who have previously not engaged with therapeutic support have now started to seek and benefit from this support.

Staff are highly skilled in implementing responsive one-to-one discussions with children. There is a strong restorative philosophy at the home, which the children invest in and understand. When incidents between children have occurred, they have been managed very well and children resolve and reflect on their differences.

Staff understand the risks that children face at the home and in the community. High-quality risk assessments and behaviour strategies are effective in providing guidance to staff to ensure that children are safer. Risk-reduction measures are responsive and enable children to have increasing levels of freedom and independence when it is safe to do so. Staff are not risk-averse; this means that children can safely navigate new experiences and challenges.

Managers closely monitor the use of physical intervention. They review records of incidents with the staff and children. There have been periods when incidents have increased and some of these have resulted in the use of advanced holds to maintain children's safety. In these instances, staff responses are proportionate. Triggers to children's anxiety are fully understood and children's risk management plans are suitably adapted.

Staff have worked in partnership with a specialist team to provide very good support to a child to explore their sexuality and sexual health safely.

There have been some instances of allegations being made against staff, which managers have responded to effectively. When learning has been identified, it has been clearly addressed with staff. Children are offered high levels of care and support in such circumstances, and staff ensure that children know they are being listened to.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

A qualified manager leads the staff confidently to provide high-quality care and experiences to the children. The manager is well supported by the senior management team, which collectively inspires a child-centred model of care that is understood and adopted by staff. This model of care is underpinned by several areas of research and leads to excellent outcomes for children.

The manager makes good use of external monitoring visits by an independent person to enhance support to children. Internal monitoring reviews are rigorous, and the home's development plan identifies clear opportunities to further improve support. The management team recently commissioned an educational psychologist to review care planning systems and life-story work for children. The findings from this review are being used to continuously improve practice.

The staff and managers demand the very best for children who are moving on. Managers are tenacious and proactive in advocating for children moving out of the home to ensure that any moves are in children's best interests. This has given one child the confidence to start his own online petition to help secure his preferred next destination.

Children are well prepared to live in a diverse society and are supported to understand people's differences and needs. The managers and staff work with the school staff to help children understand differences of race, sexuality and culture very effectively.

The managers and staff have very positive relationships with the children's social workers and families. These relationships help to make sure that all the people involved in the children's lives work together to provide excellent care.

The staff take advantage of a comprehensive training programme. Robust training ensures that staff are well equipped to meet the children's needs. The staff implement this knowledge in their daily practice. Following training courses, staff continue to reflect on their learning through supervisions, team meetings and reflective practice discussions.

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

- The registered person should provide a nurturing and homely environment. In particular, they should ensure that deep cleaning routines are consistently effective. ('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:** SC063259

**Provision sub-type:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** SES Avocet Limited

**Responsible individual:** Jonathan Lees

**Registered manager:** Daniel Baldock

## Inspectors

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

Jamie Cousins, Social Care Inspector

Mary Costello, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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