

SC023736

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a private organisation. It provides care for up to three children who have experienced some form of loss, neglect, trauma or rejection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 22 March 2021.

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.

We last visited this setting on 2 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2022

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 8 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/10/2019	Full	Good
21/08/2018	Full	Good
31/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
26/07/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff provide consistently good-quality care and support to children. As a result, children make progress. Close relationships between children and staff enable the children to confidently seek help, advice and support from staff who they know well.

Children are listened to by an attentive staff team. The children feel able to raise any concerns they have. Regular children's meetings take place where children are encouraged to contribute their ideas about how the home is run. The staff use these meetings to educate the children about safety and to form positive relationships with each other. The children are prepared well for other children moving into the home.

External professionals, such as speech and language therapists, attend staff meetings to discuss the children's needs. The staff adapt their approach in response to this intervention. This is effective in guiding staff about the best way to communicate with children.

The staff help children to reach their academic potential by working closely with teaching staff at the organisation's school. All the children attend full-time school. One child, who previously struggled to read, has increased in confidence and can now read aloud in front of his class.

Staff regularly reward children for meeting their agreed goals. They talk about the children's achievements with pride.

The children are supported to engage in a range of activities of their choice. Many of the opportunities within the community were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The staff have encouraged children to re-engage with their interests. The staff accompany children, or stay within the area, to be available for children if they struggle. As a result, the children feel safe and secure.

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

Managers and staff respond in a timely manner to safeguarding concerns by reporting and referring them to the relevant safeguarding agencies. The manager discusses safeguarding scenarios in staff meetings to ensure that the policies and procedures are at the forefront of staff's practice. The recommendation from the last inspection has been met.

One child reported an incident that occurred within the community which made him feel unsafe. This matter was reported to the police. Direct work with him, and the use of research, was effective in helping him to regain his confidence.

Managers and staff are trained in the home's preferred method of behaviour management. The use of physical interventions has significantly reduced. When

incidents do occur, staff explain the lead up to the incident and de-escalation methods used. The staff are given time to reflect, and children's views are sought. The manager analyses the incidents for trends and implements any learning.

Direct work with children is meaningful, well recorded and helpful. The children understand how to keep themselves safe online. There is no formal agreement with children about the use of mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices. This means that there is the potential for children to not fully understand the boundaries or agreed use of this equipment.

The area manager and independent visitor undertake targeted work with children when there is a risk of the placement ending. This has been effective for one child, for whom there has been a reduction in threats to make false allegations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers agreed risk management strategies when a child moved into the home. These strategies were agreed with the child's placing authority. However, staff practice has now changed and is not in line with these agreed strategies. The manager acknowledges that the timing of the child's admission, and her own absence from the home, has meant that the detail of expected supervision levels lacked clarity. Senior managers have not given the staff the necessary leadership to guide them to prevent this occurring.

In addition, a lone working risk assessment was not appropriately completed. This document does not make clear how or why it was appropriate to have one member of staff working alone with three children. Two of the children needed close supervision. However, the assessment lacked detail regarding how this might be achieved. The children's social workers were not made aware of this situation. This is a serious omission which prevents professionals involved in the children's care from being able to ensure that children are safe and that their needs are met.

An informative location review includes consultation with external agencies. Staff use this reliable knowledge of the risks posed to the children by the local area in their care planning.

Team meetings are held regularly and are child focused. These meetings also cover improvements required to the running of the home. Staff report that the manager has helped them to develop, and they value her experience and knowledge. Staff morale is high. They work together to provide consistent care for the children.

Most of the staff's training is up to date. Nearly all staff have the required level 3 qualification and one staff member is working towards this. Some disruption to training occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders and managers have plans in place to address any shortfalls in staff knowledge or skills due to this disruption.

Leaders and managers develop the service. An external auditor recommends areas of improvement, which are addressed. A workforce plan is kept up to date and shows an effective review of the knowledge, skills and experience of the staff.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)) In particular, ensure that there is clarity about supervision levels for children.	2 May 2022
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)) In particular, ensure that children's care plans are followed and updated in the registered manager's absence.	2 May 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	2 May 2022

that arrangements are in place to—

ensure the effective induction of each child into the home.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff meet the children's basic needs in the way that a good parent would. Staff should recognise that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. In particular, the registered person should ensure that bedrooms are redecorated following incidents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that children feel safe and are safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside of the home to the extent that any good parent would. In particular, the registered person should ensure that children sign contracts around the use of mobile phones and games consoles. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

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: SC023736

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited, 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Elizabeth Wynne-Thomas

Inspector

Suzy Lemmy, Social Care Inspector

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