

SC023737

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to three children who have emotional, behavioural and mild learning difficulties. For several years, the home has focused on providing care for girls.

There is no registered manager at this home. The post has been vacant since 11 January 2019.

Inspection dates: 31 January to 1 February 2019

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: 7 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/02/2018	Full	Good
19/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/08/2016	Full	Good

03/02/2016

Interim

Improved effectiveness

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
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(h))	04/04/2019

Recommendation

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each (regulation 45) review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the Quality Standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions

required for the next six months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

In particular, the registered person should include information from regulation 44 reports as part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions and ensure that this information adds value to the process of continuous improvement.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Most children who move into this home feel valued and settle quickly. They engage with routines in the home, develop feelings of security and become increasingly able to address their individual challenges. They make progress in understanding their feelings and in developing positive, non-harmful ways of expressing these. They become more able to reflect on their behaviours and to adjust these where needed.

The children engage in their learning and vocational development and make heartening progress. This is achieved with the support of a staff team that prioritises the children's education and works closely with teaching staff to support the children's learning both inside and outside school. Staff are ambitious for children, including how they can succeed in employment in later years; the children respond to this positive message and plan for their futures.

Children's feelings of belonging, security and being valued are the consequence of the staff seeking to know and understand the children and being deeply interested in how they can help children make best progress. This is particularly reflected in the records of the regular child-focused team meetings, at which the progress and planning for each child are intricately discussed.

This positive picture is, however, marred by an isolated incident of an ill-considered admission to the home during this inspection period. This resulted in a quick, unplanned ending. For this vulnerable child, it was a further negative care experience that should have been prevented.

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

The children display a strong sense of belonging and attachment to the home and staff who run it. They say that they feel cared for and protected and can depend on and trust the staff. They have learned that staff listen carefully to what they have to say and will respond positively to any needs or anxieties expressed.

The staff are confident and realistic in their understanding of the children and can support their emerging independence and the taking of risks appropriate to their abilities and understanding effectively. They have developed skills and knowledge to protect the children from known hazards and dangers in the physical community and online, and actively support children to understand these dangers and to make themselves safer.

On rare occasions when children go missing, effective systems are in place to find and safeguard them in the shortest possible time. This is because staff know the location well, have established good working relationships with the police and other protection agencies and have also planned for these unwanted events.

High levels of engagement between children and staff, consistent promotion and reinforcement of positive behaviour, and a proactive approach to conflicts, contribute directly to a low level of disruptive incidents, including the need for physical interventions. Staff also anticipate and plan for likely events or circumstances that may upset children, to reduce their likely harmful effects.

High standards of safer recruitment of staff and embedded systems of health and safety checks in the home are maintained and help to keep the children safe from avoidable hazards.

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

Ofsted has not yet received formal notification that the previous registered manager has left. Neither has an application to register been submitted by the interim manager. Consequently, the registered manager still holds responsibility for the home but has transferred within the organisation to manage another of its homes.

During this inspection period, one isolated incident of an ill-considered admission was identified. This occurred as the result of a failure of senior managers to adequately understand the needs of the child before it was agreed that the child would move in. Once in placement, it quickly became apparent that staff could not meet this child's complex needs, resulting in further disruption for the child when the placement ended. The home's own admission procedures were not followed, in accordance with the home's own statement of purpose. Senior leaders were unable to demonstrate that this example has been sufficiently reviewed to learn lessons about the organisation's approach to admissions practice.

Wider monitoring processes are weak. The regulation 44 and 45 review processes do not enable the continuous improvement of the home. For example, the regulation 44 visitor failed to identify the failures by leaders and managers in relation to an unsuccessful placement. This was also not addressed in the subsequent regulation 45 review and lessons were not learned. The regulation 45 process lacks analysis and planning. Consequently, relevant patterns, trends and areas of weakness are not sufficiently identified or remedied. In other areas, the processes for monitoring the progress of children and the day-to-day operation of the home are effective.

In practice, the manager handover arrangements have been well planned and executed; aimed at ensuring continuity and the maintenance of the standards previously achieved. The internally promoted interim manager knows the home well and is enthusiastic and confident about achieving continuous improvement of the service.

The cohesive and committed staff team is balanced by diversity and celebrates cultural differences. Staff actively support the children in exploring and embracing the things that make them different. Advocacy for the children is strong and leaders are tenacious in pursuing the wishes and best interests of the children.

The staff team is well supported in its practice by planned training, regular group and individual supervision and meaningful annual appraisals. New members of the team are carefully recruited and follow a thorough and well-planned induction. Initial periods of probation are supported by heightened individual supervision and regular, considered review.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC023737

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: Rebecca Wheeler

Inspector

John Pledger, social care inspector

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