

SC023739

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated children's home can accommodate up to three children. It is currently being used exclusively for girls who have a history of difficult attachments and require intensive support. The registered manager position is vacant. The acting manager is currently in the process of registering with Ofsted.

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 1 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 27 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2018	Full	Good
30/08/2017	Full	Good
07/02/2017	Full	Good
26/04/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children flourish and thrive in this home. Children describe a caring environment where they can explore their emotions openly. Children say that staff listen to them. As a result, the children and staff have secure, supportive, and respectful relationships.

Children make excellent progress because the dedicated and skilled staff provide stability in a nurturing and homely environment. Children have personalised their bedrooms and have had the opportunity to choose colours and themes throughout the home during a redecoration. Therefore, children have a sense of belonging and enjoy living in the home.

The excellent care and progress of children is supported by the model of care and the ethos of the home. Professionals have praised the children's achievements. Children engage with those that support them. For example, children share their views in meetings about their care planning and education. One child has been supported to complete training for children in relation to attending professional meetings. This means that the children contribute positively to decision-making and plans about their future.

Staff promote consistent boundaries, expectations, and responses which benefit the children. Research-based practice and problem-solving, rather than sanction-based care, encourages children to make positive choices. The time staff spend with children is reflective and insightful, offering them guidance on how they can do better or different. As a result, children have made significant progress in developing effective strategies to manage their emotions and subsequently enjoy more time with family and peers because of the confident choices they are making.

Children have succeeded in education because staff have high aspirations for them. Staff provide realistic and insightful support. Effective and regular contact with schools and colleges ensures that children have consistent responses. The views of children are heard and acted upon. Bespoke learning is facilitated by creative staff that ensure all children continue to access learning and gain knowledge and skills for moving onto the next chapter of their lives.

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

Staff and managers promote the safety and well-being of children in all environments. They encourage children to take age-appropriate risks. For example, travelling independently to college or to see their friends and family. Consequently, children have made significant progress towards independence and there has been a significant reduction in risk-taking behaviour in relation to children's starting points.

Effective and detailed risk assessments enable staff to work collectively and consistently with the children. Risk assessments and other necessary documents are updated to reflect any change in dynamics or behaviour. The manager has thorough oversight of these. Updates are shared with all staff and professionals. Managers and staff learn from experiences and seek additional training if required. Staff know the children exceptionally well and are highly skilled in seeking necessary support quickly and safely.

Children want to spend time with each other and staff. Because of this, children rarely go missing. However, staff are proactive and conscientious if a child is late or they become aware of any concern. One child told the inspector that staff speak to them about dangers and how to keep themselves safe. Managers have invested in research-based information sharing to enable a better understanding of specialist areas. For example, the manager has a specific lead on research from Child Exploitation and Online Protection. This information is shared with all staff to support their safeguarding practice and therefore minimising the risk of harm and exploitation to the children.

Staff know the children extremely well and can recognise body language and triggers that may cause them distress. Nonetheless, the use of restraint in this home is rare. Children know how to complain and confidently said that they would talk to staff and managers if they wanted to make a complaint. They would also use the information in the children's guide. However, some information in the guide is out of date.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is currently managed by a confident and child-focused interim manager who is in the process of registering with Ofsted. The staff team is dependable and highly competent. This offers stability and routine to the children's lives.

The manager and senior leaders have highly effective monitoring systems and quality assurance processes in place. An additional layer of scrutiny is provided via the independent visitor. Recommendations from these visits are acted upon swiftly. This ensures that there is no drift in the actions needed to meet the needs of the children and staff.

The responsible individual has full oversight of the home's operation and quality via regular management meetings. Despite the excellent thread of safeguarding throughout daily practice, the omission of safeguarding in the provider's action plan could miss opportunities to refresh and update important priorities. Nonetheless, managers and leaders ensure that actions are reviewed regularly and safeguarding is promoted.

All staff receive regular practice-related supervision which is the foundation of the knowledgeable and empathic care they provide the children. New and inexperienced

staff are supported via a well thought-out and systematic induction. When practice falls short of the high expectations of managers, staff are fully supported to excel in their ability to meet the needs of the children.

Team meetings are well attended and offer a platform for staff to share information and experiences. Agreed actions are implemented quickly by staff and managers. Training is accessible to staff and all mandatory training has been completed. Where additional training is identified, managers are proactive and resourceful to fulfil the need. As a result, staff remain up to date and consistent in meeting the needs of the children.

Senior leaders are visible in the home and know the children incredibly well. They maintain ongoing dialogue with the manager and staff to remain up to date with care planning and decision-making. This highlights the positive impact that living in the home has on children's progress and permanence.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should review and update the children's guide as necessary, and make sure children are given an explanation of any changes. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23)
- The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

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: SC023739

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector

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