

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 may 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 manager registered with Ofsted on 24 January 2017.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 August 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/08/2017	Full	Good
07/02/2017	Full	Good
26/04/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in these activities. Staff should also support children to take part in school trips, out of school and other clubs, volunteering and leisure activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
In particular, find ways to use the home's vehicle more frequently to support this.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include any steps they will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
In particular, ensure that all high-risk behaviours are covered and that guidance is given to staff to minimise the impact of these risks.
- The home's procedures must take into account the views of appropriate local services and have regard to police and local authority protocols for responding to missing person's incidents in the areas where the home is located. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.29)
In particular, review whether reporting to the police is necessary when children have not returned home yet their whereabouts are sufficiently known.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The manager and staff of the home have provided stable and consistent care to children throughout this inspection period. The three children in the home have remained here throughout this time, and two of the three have benefited from stays of approximately three years. All the children have made good progress during this time.

Children have been supported to make progress in their education. The two children have done well, one attaining a college qualification and one securing an apprenticeship with the local authority. Although one girl is not currently in education, it is evident that the managers in the home had sought appropriate courses but that she has not re-engaged since completing last year's work. One child in the home is in mainstream education. Attendance in education and work has been excellent throughout this period, for those with these placements.

Children enjoy the life of the home. They have strong relationships with staff, who are both supportive and honest with children in helping them to learn to live together and prepare for the next phase in their lives. Children's views are listened to and taken on board.

Children are encouraged to enjoy a diverse social and recreational life. When children form close relationships with others, staff seek to learn about and meet their friends, as any good parent might. Children are encouraged to enjoy social and sporting activities, and they are supported to attend these. The home has a car, but on many shifts there is no member of staff who can drive it. Staff will always use public transport as an alternative, but this may sometimes discourage children's involvement in activities away from the home.

Managers and staff ensure that they know about, and maintain good communication with, the families of the children in the home. They will facilitate contact for children and are sensitive to any possibility of fraught contact. This leads to bespoke support, including taking steps to prepare children for these meetings.

Children benefit from a pleasing physical environment. The house is roomy, well furnished and situated on an attractive road.

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

Children feel safe, and managers and staff take the right steps to keep them safe in the home. Staff know the behaviour of children well and plan carefully to manage it safely.

The staff follow clear plans if children go missing. There have been few occasions when staff have not known children's whereabouts, although children have, at times, stayed out long after they were advised to return. Police have been informed regularly about

these instances, yet managers have not reviewed when this is and is not necessary. In all instances seen by the inspector, the staff had worked diligently to secure the safe return of children and treated them with dignity throughout these episodes. Staff actively look for children and bring them back to the home.

The risk assessments that have been devised for children ensure that risks are well known to staff and that intervention strategies for them to follow are clear. However, there were one or two risks, including road safety and the use of the internet, for which strategies for the staff to follow were not well documented. However, it was clear from speaking with staff that they were all aware and duly mindful of these risks.

Managers in the home are very clear about responsible risk taking. They have actively encouraged children to develop greater independence, including helping them to manage under-confidence and social phobia. It was also notable that children who still require close supervision receive this, sensitively but securely.

The staff in the home are all trained in the use of restraint. This has occurred quite regularly because of the behaviour of one child, but records are well maintained and demonstrate that the majority of interventions have been exceptionally brief. The manager reviews these records closely to see the trends and consider if any alternative strategies may be used.

The health and safety of the home is managed well. Records of all checks are maintained, paying good attention to fire safety.

The recruitment of staff is undertaken safely, and all essential checks are carried out during this process. Any potentially negative information is considered carefully.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has just achieved the required level 5 qualification. She is a strong leader who ensures that the entire staff team is child centred and that all members of staff understand their roles and responsibilities. She is methodical and ensures that managerial tasks are completed in a timely way.

The staff team receives reliable support, with regular supervision and good access to the manager, who is a real presence in the home. The area manager for the home is also closely involved and is approachable by all staff. The home currently has only one part-time staff member designated as a senior, but this is being reviewed.

Staff training is comprehensive, and the manager ensures that all staff keep up to date with their learning. Staff, including those who are new to the organisation, are happy with the level of training that they receive. All staff who have been working for more than two years have attained the level 3 qualification that is expected.

Two recommendations were made at the last inspection, and the manager has ensured

that both were sufficiently implemented.

Monitoring of the home, through both the independent visitor and the manager's own bi-annual reports, is of a good standard.

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 difference 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: SC023739

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Lesley Dunne

Inspector

Kenneth Smith, social care inspector

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