

SC023741

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2017.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2023

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: 20 April 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/04/2022	Full	Outstanding
05/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
25/04/2019	Full	Outstanding
08/05/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are thriving in a safe, clean and well-organised home. They have personalised their bedrooms and there are photos of the children around the house. This contributes to children's sense of belonging and gives the environment a homely feel.

The current group of children have lived together for several years and are very settled in the home, which they describe as 'the best'. They are comfortable and relaxed with the adults caring for them. Children understand their care plans and they talk about their individual targets and the excellent progress they are making towards them. Children told the inspector that their views are listened to and that any complaints or worries are taken seriously and addressed.

Staff are aspirational for the children and use every opportunity to offer praise and help them to understand how to build and to maintain positive relationships with each other and with staff. For example, during the inspection, staff members appropriately reminded children about respecting each other's personal space in a way that was kind yet clear. This approach supports children's continuing personal development and awareness of social skills.

Children benefit from consistent boundaries, routines and predictable responses from staff. Children make exceptional progress in relation to learning how to manage their emotions. Staff have a sound awareness of children's early life experiences and understand how these may affect their emotional well-being and behaviour. This understanding is developed through training, supervision, team discussions and support from the therapy team. Because of the progress they have made at the home, one child is soon going to move to live with a foster family. They are encouraged to talk about their conflicting emotions and worries about the move. Such conversations are well recorded and significant points followed up appropriately.

Children's wishes and views are sought and acted on swiftly by managers and staff. For example, one child was feeling unhappy following a change to their medication. The manager requested a review with the relevant medical team and ensured that the child's views were made known.

All children attend education in one of the organisation's schools. Additionally, one child spends an afternoon a week at a local mainstream school to build their confidence and inform longer-term planning. The child told the inspector that they love going to the school and they hope to be a full-time pupil there one day. They have made friends in their class and were recently invited to join them on an activity day. The headteacher at the school spoke extremely highly of the mutual benefits of

this collaborative arrangement and the excellent levels of communication between the school and the manager and staff at the home.

Children sit with the adults at mealtimes and talk about their day. They enjoy healthy, nutritious meals, which they are involved in choosing. Children's independence is fully promoted by them helping with age-appropriate tasks.

The manager and staff develop and maintain strong partnerships with other professionals, and this improves outcomes for children. The high-quality care that children receive is acknowledged and appreciated by social workers and other professionals. One social worker said that a child had made 'huge progress' in the home, and an independent reviewing officer said that they had observed 'warm and rewarding relationships' between children and staff.

Comprehensive reports are written for children's statutory reviews. The reports give a good overview of progress in the review period, and children have a say about the information that is included. The reports would be enhanced by clearly capturing children's views and comments about the report content.

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

Children's safety is paramount in this home. The manager has exceptionally high expectations of staff conduct. There is a culture of openness, which contributes to children's safety and their sense of security.

Children said that they feel safe here. The manager ensures that staff fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know the external safeguarding agencies to contact if they have any concerns about children's safety and well-being.

Due to the trusting, respectful and secure relationships that children enjoy with staff, children do not go missing from the home and there are exceptionally low levels of behavioural incidents. Positive behaviour is promoted in a calm, thoughtful and supportive way. The registered manager is the physical intervention trainer for the wider organisation. He ensures that staff make effective use of de-escalation techniques and, as a result, physical restraint is rarely used.

Children have thorough and detailed risk assessments that clearly describe how to keep them safe. These are updated regularly, both when an incident has occurred and when there are upcoming events that may unsettle children. Consequently, staff remain attuned and responsive to the risks present for children individually and as a group.

A new staff member has been recruited since the last inspection. He speaks highly of his induction training, particularly in relation to safeguarding children. The overall safeguarding approach ensures that all staff stay alert to signs that children are at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is exceptionally committed to the children and to the home. He strives to ensure that his team works together to achieve positive outcomes for children. His energy, ambition and dedication are acknowledged and appreciated by the staff, who see him as an inspirational role model.

Staff have confidence in the registered manager and, as a result, they feel empowered in their roles. Morale is high and staff turnover is low. Staff feel proud of the progress that children are making and proud to work in the home. One staff member told the inspector that it is the motivation and commitment shared by the whole staff team that make this home so successful. Consequently, children enjoy living in a settled home with a positive staff team that has an extremely child-focused approach.

The manager shows great enthusiasm and optimism about the continuing development of his team and is supportive of staff's individual career aspirations and progression. He is fully aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses and how to address areas for development.

There is an embedded culture of welcoming feedback from external sources. Criticisms and comments about the service are seen as an opportunity to learn, reflect and improve. For example, in response to a recommendation made at the last inspection, the registered manager has introduced a 'My Care Plan' document, which is completed with children to help them to understand their journeys to date and identify aspirations for the future.

The registered manager's oversight and scrutiny of the home are extremely thorough. As a result, he has an exceptionally well-rounded view of the experiences of the children and the impact that the care is having on their outcomes.

Staff receive regular, meaningful supervision. Focused team meetings provide staff with opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding about how to meet children's needs. However, annual appraisals, including the registered manager's, are not taking place at the required intervals. In practice, there are plentiful opportunities for staff and managers to discuss performance strengths, areas for improvement and individual development, but this is undermined by those discussions not being recorded.

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 registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	1 September 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children are actively involved in important meetings and supported to express their views, wishes and feelings. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.10)

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: SC023741

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: Michael Atkins

Inspector

Mike Simmonds, Social Care Inspector

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