

SC023741

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for a maximum of three children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Three boys are currently accommodated in the home. The registered manager has been in post since January 2017.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 May 2018

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: 16 May 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2017	Full	Good
21/06/2016	Full	Good
27/04/2016	Full	Inadequate
25/11/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- The registered manager must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4) In particular, the manager should make use of research, theory and practice references to improve delivery.
- The registered manager must ensure that staff gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 13.2) In particular, staff should have more advanced knowledge and skills to meet their more complex needs.
- The registered manager must further develop the home's approach to risk management to include clear strategies that enable children to reduce risks and increase their understanding about how to protect themselves. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraphs 9.9 and 9.10)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Highly individualised care, consistently delivered, enables the children to make significant progress across all areas. The warm and strong attachments that the children develop with their competent carers make them feel safe and secure. Combined with this, the consistent maintenance of boundaries and routines confirms to the children that they are highly valued and can depend on the adults who care for them.

The secure relationships that the staff establish with the children allow the children to express their feelings and explore the issues that trouble them. A coordinated and targeted system of key working enables the staff and children to work together in addressing their anxieties, as well as their individual needs outlined in their plans. Staff display a hunger and readiness to further develop their knowledge and skills to support the progress of the children.

The staff talk about the children in great detail and with much affection and understanding. This translates into strong ambition and action for the children to make the best possible progress with their schooling, in discovering and developing their skills and interests and in having fun and building positive memories.

Staff combine a range of activities and are sensitive to the dynamics between the children in ascertaining their wishes and feelings. This provides them with the fullest opportunities to express their preferences, dissatisfaction or concerns. Staff are highly responsive when the children use these opportunities and are patient and considered when responding to unreasonable, unrealistic or inappropriate requests. This approach emphasises to the children that they are valued and that their views matter.

Staff are skilled in their understanding of the children and work very closely with their teachers, placing social workers and families in securing their best possible progress and well-being. Staff are highly thoughtful and careful in managing all significant events affecting the children. This ensures that family contacts are facilitated in a manner that actively focuses on the best interests of the children. For those children preparing to move on, staff support this process sensitively and at the child's own pace. Such practice increases the chances of success.

Placing social workers and family members speak highly of the homely atmosphere and good organisation of the home. Excellent communication with the home and high standards of individualised care of the children are consistently cited by these stakeholders as enduring features of the home. This confidence in and positive regard for the home contributes to the children's feelings of security and belonging.

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

The enduring stability of the home and warm, trusting relationships with staff make the children feel safe and secure. These feelings are also extended to outside the home during planned activities, because staff are well organised and attentive to the needs and safety of the children. A sound knowledge of the locality and emergency services, formalised in a current assessment, adds to the staff's capacity to keep the children safe.

High-quality and relevant individual assessments and plans keep staff alert to the specific risks and vulnerabilities of each child. These, together with insightful behaviour assessments and the staff team's excellent understanding of the children, enable staff to be skilful and proactive in avoiding or managing risks and in de-escalating potentially harmful situations. Staff have been so successful at protecting the children from potential harm that the children are now ready to further develop their own skills and understanding in protecting themselves.

The practice of restrictive physical interventions is underpinned by a culture in the home of intrinsic value and respect for the children. High but clear thresholds, for interventions that do not compromise on the safety of the children, are maintained. This places strong emphasis on proaction, prevention and de-escalation. When these have been unsuccessful, the steps taken are proportionate to the assessed levels of risk and are of the shortest possible duration.

The careful and considered approach to restrictive physical interventions is very clearly evidenced in the consistently high-quality recording of incidents. Highlighted in these

records is meaningful reflection by the affected children and their understanding of the reasons for the actions taken.

During this inspection period, there were no incidents requiring notification to Ofsted. This reflects sustained high levels of proaction, attentiveness and appropriate levels of supervision. Incidents of children going missing are rare, but when they occur the response of staff is urgent, comprehensive and sustained until the child is located and safeguarded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A determined and dedicated registered manager has succeeded in establishing a clear brand for the home. The key features of this are high levels of organisation and administration, a high-quality and dedicated staff team, a homely environment, high ambition for the attainments of the children and a sound connection with external agencies and the families of the children.

Systems of recording and administration are clear, effective and firmly embedded. The registered manager said, 'This allows us to do the important stuff – to be with the children.' The registered manager, who also works regular shifts in the home, displays a firm grasp of all the key activities in the home and has his fingers on the pulse of the progress and well-being of each child.

Although part of a wider organisation with prescribed procedures and materials, the registered manager improves these when they are found wanting in facilitating the progress of the children. He is actively engaged in improving prescribed practice and will innovate, improvise and develop materials to improve the quality of care. An example of this is the introduction of daily monitoring sheets focused on specific issues, which has led to significantly improved healthcare arrangements for one child.

Standards of recruitment practice are strong and the threshold for deciding on the suitability of candidates to work in the home is high. This has ensured the assembly of a diverse staff team with a wide range of attributes but who are all wholly focused on the safety, progress and well-being of the children. This cohesive staff team, with a shared sense of purpose that is fully aligned with the stated ethos of the home, is able to deliver high-quality care to the children.

The clear focus and high motivation of the staff team is sustained by regular and meaningful supervision, group clinical supervision, fortnightly team meetings and targeted training. The staff induction process is managed with care and ensures that mutual expectations are clear and that staff's progression to full duties is appropriately paced.

The registered manager uses various practice and research references, particularly those relating to building positive environments, to improve the quality of care. However, wider use can be made of the range of relevant research and theory that is available to inform improvements. The staff team currently displays an appetite for deepening its

understanding of the children's needs as well as the desire to develop its skills in meeting these. This positive factor is not currently detailed within the registered manager's workforce development plan.

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: SC023741

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: Michael Atkins

Inspector:

John Pledger, social care inspector

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