

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 manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2017.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 April 2019

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: 8 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
16/05/2017	Full	Good
21/06/2016	Full	Good
27/04/2016	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff have created a warm and welcoming space for children to live in. This nurturing environment enables children to make excellent and consistent progress. Staff and professionals described 'transformational' change for children. Children who had not been able to sustain stable placements before are thriving. Children who had previously been completely disengaged from education are now engaged and enthusiastic. Children who have severe emotional regulation challenges are building resilience. They are learning to deal with the challenges they face in a constructive and reflective way. Children have been able to develop levels of empathy and trust that were not witnessed by staff and professionals in any setting before.

Staff maintain the building to a very high standard. Children's rooms are filled with personalised touches that reflect their interests. Children said they loved their rooms, and one child commented that they could not think of anything they would change.

Children's successes are celebrated openly. Certificates of achievement are displayed over the walls in the games room. Staff are also encouraged to write affirmations about the children on a board in the dining room every day. Children are encouraged to reflect on their own progress. Staff never miss an opportunity to praise children and find positives even when faced with challenge.

Children are supported by a small, consistent staff team. Staff have the capacity to give children lots of focused one-to-one time. They also encourage communal activity to create strong peer relationships. Children enjoy each other's company and clearly get on well. Staff and external professionals all referred to the family feel of the home.

The child's voice is strongly promoted. Children have input into their care plans and are involved at all stages of decision-making. Staff give children plentiful opportunities to contribute their ideas. Children's views are highly valued. They feel that they can really affect change.

Record-keeping is of an exemplary standard. Files are well structured, and report writing is of a very high quality. Care plans are living documents that are regularly updated. Staff track progress against all identified needs and create detailed monthly reports. Staff form effective partnerships with professionals. Goals and targets are shared across agencies to ensure that children experience consistency.

Staff have excellent relationships with the children's education settings. They send email communications to school every day to highlight significant issues. School staff also send a daily report. This is discussed with children when they return to the home. Staff use positive incentives to encourage engagement in education. They also ensure that success in education is acknowledged and validated.

Transitions are becoming an important focus for staff. They are working hard to develop their skills and knowledge in this area. Great partnership work is being done to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in the home.

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

Staff have a well-developed understanding of the risks faced by children in their care. They also acknowledge that these risks shift and change as children enter adolescence. They take time and care to develop trusting relationships. This allows them to talk to children openly about their personal safety. Staff enable children to build resilience and protect themselves from potential harm. This has led to a significant reduction in risk-taking behaviours for all children in the home.

Staff take every opportunity to promote safeguarding for children. Staff place safeguarding issues on the agenda at children's meetings. They also raise them informally during day-to-day interaction and key working. E-learning is used to help children gain an understanding of issues such as child sexual exploitation, knife crime and e-safety. There is a current plan to provide tailored courses for staff training, which can be delivered to all the children who live in the organisation's homes.

Staff are skilled at dealing with challenging behaviours. Staff were positive about the quality of training and development they receive in this area. They spoke confidently about effective behaviour support, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and online safety.

Records of restraint are thorough. Restraint is used as a last resort and only then to safeguard children and staff. There has only been one case of police involvement in an incident this year and this was proportionate to the level of risk presented. Children are given frequent opportunities to debrief following incidents. The quality of debriefs, using graphics to help children express their feelings, is superb. Children display an impressive depth of reflection. They also have the opportunity to discuss the events and impacts of incidents with their key workers in informal sessions.

Children very rarely go missing from the home. When incidents do occur, they are short and staff responses are proactive. Chronology's are clear and staff actions to return children to the home are exhaustive.

Staff are very aware of the risks posed by the internet. They receive excellent training on e-safety. They understand the risks of online radicalisation. Children are happy to work closely with staff to ensure that the usage of mobile phones and other connected devices is safe. Practical measures are in place to protect online devices. E-safety measures have been contracted out to a local specialist provider.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager promotes a culture that places the interests and needs of children at the forefront of everything the team does. Staff clearly hold all the children in high affection. Children feel nurtured and cared for as a result. The manager provides enthusiastic and motivating leadership. He has high expectations of the team and the children in the home. He carries his team along with him, and the team clearly values his leadership.

The registered manager has huge pride in his home. He spoke with warmth and enthusiasm about the children and staff. He takes strong oversight of operational activity. Staff said that he goes out of his way to make himself available to everyone. The registered manager values the staff voice. He gives them opportunities to share their ideas and take a lead on work practice initiatives.

Staff share a strong sense of common purpose. They constantly strive to develop and improve the home. The registered manager is forward thinking and uses internal monitoring alongside strong oversight to identify areas for improvement. Workforce planning is thorough. Developmental goals are challenging but achievable. However, the registered manager and his team could make more opportunities to reflect on and learn from progress being made in the home.

Staff are reflective and willing to learn. The registered manager encourages staff to explore theoretical approaches to childcare. Training includes specialist courses on autism, trauma, therapeutic relationships, self-harm and substance misuse.

Staff feel that this training and learning is very beneficial. They feel that it really adds to their understanding of children. It also informs behaviour management approaches. The registered manager ensures that best practice is filtered through to his team in supervision, training and staff meetings. Staff really value both formal and informal supervision. They all particularly highlighted the benefits of informal group supervision with the organisation's therapy service.

Relationships with education and social workers are of a very high quality. Social workers praised the home highly. It was noted that the registered manager and his team are superb advocates for children. This comes across very strongly in joint meetings and reviews. The registered manager is very comfortable with challenging external agencies to promote the best outcomes possible for children in his care.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulation 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
In particular, identify strengths and weaknesses in the service to further enhance service delivery.

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: 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Michael Atkins

Inspector

Peter Jackson, social care inspector

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