

# SC023743

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A private company owns and manages this home for up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 10 to 11 January 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 17 January 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children enjoy warm and affectionate relationships with staff.
- A stable staff team helps children feel settled.
- Leadership and management are good. There is a strong focus on keeping children safe in the home.
- Children make progress and achieve good outcomes in relation to their starting

points.

- Children feel cared for and nurtured.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 17/01/2017      | Full            | Good                      |
| 26/04/2016      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 08/12/2015      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness   |
| 08/06/2015      | Full            | Good                      |

# 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   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>(1) The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>(2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children, the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it, and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>(3) After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review.</p> <p>(4) The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.</p> <p>(5) The system referred to in paragraph 2 must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1–5))</p> | 28/02/2018 |

## Recommendations

- Ensure that under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: 'Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's home's providers on new duties under regulations that came in to effect in January and April 2014'. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

- Ensure the children's guide helps children to understand:
  - what the day-to-day routines of the home are ('what happens in the home');
  - the Statement of Purpose of the home (the care they can expect to receive while living there);
  - how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure;
  - how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible.

('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff and social workers say that this is a home where children's outcomes improve. Children make good progress in many areas of their lives. Their self-esteem and confidence improve as a result. A social worker said that their child 'has made improvements in most areas of his plan'. A parent said that their child's behaviour 'had improved dramatically' as a result of living in the home.

Children are very settled. Some have previously experienced multiple placement breakdowns, adding to their distress and confusion. A social worker describes this as 'a very successful placement' for their child, who has experienced 'a remarkable turnaround' as a result of living in the home with staff who 'nurture and cosset' him. Only one child has moved on in a planned way during this inspection year, with no children experiencing placement breakdown. A child said, 'Everyone takes good care of me.'

Staff work effectively to help children feel safe and happy. They show empathy for the difficulties that children may have experienced in life, wanting to give them a settled childhood. Staff set boundaries, give praise and rewards and help children feel secure in their routines. Therefore, children settle, soon regard the place as their home and their emotional well-being improves. A social worker said, 'The home has a warm and comfortable atmosphere. My child has built good relationships with the staff and is very happy.'

All of the children are in school and attend regularly. Staff support their progress, for example with a new initiative to encourage them to read more at home and help improve their reading skills and to enjoy books. Rewards reinforce children's achievements in education and in personal care and behaviour. Raffle tickets, which children 'earn' as rewards, are very popular.

Children are encouraged to pursue their interests. They enjoy spending time with the staff. Children do a lot of activities with staff in their home, with games of pool

particularly popular. They participate in activities in the local area and venture further afield during the school holidays. Staff plan to take the children on holiday next summer.

Children's views are central to this home. Staff listen to the children's views casually, for example around the meal table or when playing games, as well as in more formal sessions. A child, when asked about how they can tell staff their views, said, 'I have a key worker and we have children's meetings.'

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

Children live some distance from their placing authorities but as the staff work effectively with children's social workers and keep them informed, this does not present a challenge. A social worker said, 'The home provides a weekly update.' A parent praised the staff for keeping them informed about their child's welfare and progress.

Managers work effectively with the designated officer in the local authority to manage any concerns, for example agreeing a protocol to help manage false allegations. A thorough recruitment system and ongoing supervision help to ensure that adults are safe to work with children.

The positive relationships between staff and children are central to behaviour management. Staff discuss children's behaviour with them, providing both reassurance when they are upset and challenge when behaviour is unacceptable. Use of restraint is low. Staff use restorative justice effectively, for example in dealing with inappropriate remarks. Staff praise the boys and are very proud of their achievements and accomplishments, such as the lovely furniture some have made for the house.

Children confirm that they feel safe. They do not experience bullying in their home. One child said that they have 'the usual arguments' between children, with staff describing it as like sibling rivalry between the boys at times. Generally, the boys get on well and there is a positive atmosphere in the home. One child raised concerns about bullying at school as an issue which staff will follow up.

Staff keep children safe. Going missing and being vulnerable to exploitation are not issues for the children in this home. Neither is there any involvement in the criminal justice system. There are a low number of incidents, none requiring police involvement.

Managers maintain the building safely for children, with regular checks and tests of equipment. Children are involved in fire drills, so they know what to do in the event of a fire. The building is homely, comfortable and reasonably decorated. A social worker said, 'The environment seems very positive.' The garden space is in need of some work. The registered manager has plans to improve the outside area so that it is an attractive space for the children all year round.

The managers have compiled a risk assessment of the area. However, this is generic and contains insufficient information to confirm the safety of the area or allow staff to manage any known risks.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager leads the home well. He has a focus on continually improving practice so that children achieve good outcomes. He ensures sufficient supervision of the staff team to support them in their work with children. He is working towards achieving a suitable level 5 qualification by October 2018. A parent said, 'The home is run professionally.'

The company provides ongoing general and more specialist training to ensure that staff have the skills they need to work with the children. A staff member described this training as 'very useful to my practice'. All staff have or are working towards a level 3 qualification to ensure that they have the recommended qualification.

Children have experienced consistency in the staffing and management of the home. This inspection period has seen only one change of staff and no use of agency staff. The small staff team gets to know the children's needs really well, providing them with individual support. The staff team is currently all male. Managers say that this is not deliberate, and female staff have been involved in the home at times. However, a social worker said, 'I would prefer more of a balance, with some female staff available.'

An independent person visits the home regularly to check what is going on and to ensure the children's safety and well-being. The registered manager also conducts monthly reviews of the quality of care. He has written one report of these reviews but did not provide this to Ofsted within required timescales. A further report is overdue.

The manager has met three of the four recommendations made at the last inspection. There have been improvements to the appearance of the building, to risk assessments and to records of restraint. The children's guide now includes more crucial information, but including additional information would make the document more useful to children.

A staff member said that the home is 'run very well and we have a very close staff team. My manager is always on top of things and we have the best staff team to better children's lives, giving them the childhood they deserve.'

## **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:** SC023743

**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:** Ashley Smith

## Inspector

Jacqueline Graves, social care regulatory inspector



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