

SC023743

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home offers accommodation for up to three children who have complex needs resulting from their early life experiences. This private provider has several homes in the area and also operates a school. There is an education option for the children to attend that school.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2016.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, Ofsted suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 May 2021

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: 29 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2020	Full	Good
22/08/2018	Full	Good
10/01/2018	Full	Good
17/01/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A well-led, small, and cohesive staff team has provided the children with stability and security throughout the ever-changing landscape of the pandemic. The children have remained settled and have continued to make progress and meet the challenges of their emerging independence and need for their own identity.

The children have maintained and further developed their aspirations for the future and have remained engaged in their learning and vocational activities. They speak about their home, and the adults who care for them, with affection and attachment. One child said, 'This is my home; this is where I belong.' Another child said, 'I am really happy here, and don't want to be anywhere else.'

The children engage in activities linked to a reward system that promotes good health and the development of life skills. Staff respond to the changing interests of the children, with a new table tennis table and an electronic dart board being the current focus of activity in the home. Staff join in with these activities and this adds to the sense of community in the home.

The children talk about what they think and feel, and what their wishes are, because staff listen to them and care about them. The children invest in their personal spaces, and in the running of the home. They express a sense of belonging and permanence. The children feel free to ask if close friends can visit the home and join in mealtimes on special and other occasions.

Staff have worked hard to keep the children informed, and to understand and comply with the changing demands of the pandemic. As restrictions have changed, the staff have supported the children in maintaining best possible contact with their families and friends.

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

The stable, predictable and consistent home environment maintained by the staff team has helped the children to feel safe and secure. There has been a virtual absence of serious incidents or children going missing during this inspection period. Notable incidents are generally consistent with normal adolescent development and are well-managed by staff.

The risks and vulnerabilities associated with each child are well documented and understood by the staff. Plans to guide the staff in managing and reducing these are clear and effective. This enables staff to be bold but considered in providing the children with opportunities to explore and develop their independence and ability to make good decisions. This also contributes to a sense of normality in their care experience and helps to equip them for the future.

Staff are well-informed about the risks and hazards outside of the home that might threaten the safety and well-being of the children. Each child is protected from these, according to their stage of development but also taught how to manage these risks and protect themselves. However, given the close proximity of the home to the sea, both staff and children currently have an insufficient understanding of local tidal activity, to help them plan safe and convenient seaside outings.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The staff team is kept small to provide the best possible consistency and continuity of care for the children. The manager and staff work longer hours than usual but there are no identified shortfalls in the performance of key tasks and staff activities. These include induction, team meetings, supervision and annual appraisals which are all executed to a very good standard. The manager displays a good command over all aspects of the children's progress and the running of the home.

The previous requirement set regarding the sufficiency and consistency of staff has been met. This has been achieved by a general improvement in the suitability of staff, increased staff commitment and better organisation, with the number of core staff remaining the same. The current recording of restrictive measures taken in the home from time to time, provides a clear picture of why they became necessary. The requirement set in this regard has also been met.

The staff team is well-balanced regarding age and gender. The staff express a sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm about their roles and speak about the children with knowledge, insight and affection. All have high hopes for the children and are proud of their progress and achievements.

Although the staff have a joined-up approach in their care and nurturing of the children, this approach is not clearly described in the home's statement of purpose. There is also no coherent record and plan that shows how the workforce is being equipped to deliver on the statement of purpose, and what further development is needed in this regard. Some records were also found to be out of date. The quality of care reviews are not based on a system of on-going monitoring and are significantly lacking in analysis. The recommendation set at the last inspection regarding this, is repeated.

The above identified shortfalls are not currently having a direct effect on the progress and well-being of the children. However, although the current quality of care being provided to the children is good, these shortfalls show there is a lack of capacity and direction to further improve this.

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 compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1)) In particular, details should include the home's ethos, the outcomes that home seeks to achieve and its approach to achieving them.	19 August 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) The plan should:
 - detail the necessary management and staffing structure, (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the homes Statement of Purpose;
 - detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);
 - detail the process for managing and improving poor performance; detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4) (b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). 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. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each (regulation 45) review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that time. Using their professional judgement, they will decide on what factors to focus on. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. The written report will focus on where and how the quality of care can be improved and/or good standards maintained, and the actions required in the next 6 months to achieve this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)
- Regulations 35-39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: 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

John Pledger, Social Care Inspector

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