

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 operates a school. There is an education option for the children to attend that school.

The registered managers post is currently vacant.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 March 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2023	Full	Good
19/05/2021	Full	Good
29/01/2020	Full	Good
22/08/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There have been no children living at the since January 2024. The three children that were living in the home, moved together, along with the manager and staff to another home operated by this provider. The inspector spoke to them to get their views in relation to their experience and care during the time that they were living in this children's home.

The provider has plans to recruit a new manager and staff team and complete some refurbishment work before admitting new children to the home.

The children moved to allow the provider to undertake much needed refurbishment work. The move was extremely well planned, and staff took great care to prepare and involve the children in the move. The things that mattered most to them such as their possessions, games, furniture and the staff moved with them. They have settled quickly into their new home and are doing well.

The children spoke fondly about their time in this home and they value the relationships that they have with the manager and staff. They described how they liked their old bedrooms and one child had painted his room in the new home the same colour as his old bedroom.

All the children made excellent progress while living in the home. They are all fully engaged in education and enjoy their studies. A social worker reported that the former registered manager of the home worked extremely well with him to ensure a child got the additional support that he needed at school. This helped the child through a difficult period and has kept him on track to do well and complete GCSE exams this year.

Children are healthy, active and have fun. All the children have their own hobbies and interests and attend groups and clubs in the community such as basketball, youth clubs, cadets and snooker club. This helps them to develop healthy friendship groups outside of the home.

The three children who lived in the home are aged between 11 and 19 years old. Staff provided individual support and supervision at the right level to achieve a good balance between keeping them safe and taking acceptable risks to promote their independence. This support was delivered with genuine care and nurture. This helped children to work with the staff as they understood that they were looking after them in the same way that a good parent would.

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

Children report that they felt safe in the home. This is primarily due to the strength to the relationships that they have with staff. All children have developed more

confidence and are better able to interpret and influence the world around them. One child described how the staff know him well and know just what to do when he needs help. He felt that the manager was someone he could trust to keep him safe and well.

Children know how to complain but they did not raise any significant concerns during their time in this home. One child remarked that he knew how to raise concerns but didn't need to, 'Because everyone is so lovely.'

Staff know how to respond to concerns; they are well trained in key areas of safeguarding and the manager has excellent oversight of care practice and record keeping. Staff understand the areas where children may be vulnerable and have clear safety plans in place to guide staff should a concern arise.

There have been no significant safeguarding incidents since the last inspection. Children work well with boundaries. They do not go missing from the home and they have been supported to be safe in the home and in the community.

Children are generally well behaved and staff spend time with them to help them learn and develop insight and skills to manage their feelings constructively. The children have excellent social skills and are articulate, sociable and friendly.

On the rare occasion that staff need to use physical intervention to manage situations, this is carried out safely. Interventions are low level and short in duration. For one child, these interventions have become less frequent as he has learned to talk more about how he feels.

The manager has close oversight of any behavioural incidents and will always speak to staff and children afterwards to see if there are things that staff can learn to do better. Consequently, incidents are rare, and the group of children report that they get on well with each other.

Staff are alive to the risks presented to children by the internet and social media. They teach children about these risks and when concerns arise, they intervene promptly to monitor and educate children so that they understand how to keep themselves safe. A social worker was impressed with the way that the staff in the home shared a concern with the professional network promptly and provided 'a huge amount of support' to the child to help him stay safe online.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The judgement of requires improvement in this area is not a reflection on the practice of the former registered manager of the home. This is to reflect that the provider has not appointed a new manager for the home since he left in January and there is no staff team currently recruited or allocated to the home. As it stands, the home is largely empty of furnishing and there is extensive refurbishment and decoration required to make it ready for any new children to live in the home.

Requirements are made to ensure that the provider addresses these matters before admitting children to the home.

The provider has identified a replacement manager who has previously been employed as a senior staff member in one of their other homes. They are currently training him to take on the managers role and intend for him to apply to be registered. The area manager is suitably experienced and will provide additional oversight and support to help him develop into the role. They have staff in mind to work in the home but are awaiting employment checks to be completed following their recent recruitment campaign. It is not possible to comment on the quality of these arrangements in this report as they are not yet in place. The provider does have credible plans to make the home ready to accept new children within a few weeks and they have a good recent track record of providing good care in their other homes.

The former registered manager provided strong leadership and managed the home well. He supported the children's moves to the new home well and continued to make improvements to the service up until he left. He improved his oversight of behaviour management and intervened effectively to ensure that physical interventions were carried out safely. He also worked with the staff team to reduce the use of sanctions and ensure that incentives and positive strategies were used to encourage good behaviour. All the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection were met except for those that related to the suitability of the premises. This work is being undertaken but is not yet completed.

The former manager knows the children well and has excellent oversight of care practice. Children feel listened to and know that their views are important. Professionals speak highly of the manager and say that he works collaboratively with them. One social worker described how he felt they were able to 'co-parent' to support a child through difficulties. He went on to say that the communication from staff was, 'The best he has ever seen.' However, the manager's report following his quality-of-care review did not reflect his good oversight in practice. It did not report on some key areas of safeguarding and did not demonstrate how feedback from children, parents or external professionals had informed his assessment of the quality of care.

Staff reported that they had regular supervisions and felt supported by the former registered manager of the home. They valued the training that they received. One member of staff felt that they had learned a lot and described an open learning culture. Overall, staff painted a picture of a positive, inclusive environment and a cohesive team that keeps the needs of children at the heart of care practice.

The improved practice to ensure that weekly fire checks were carried out. A recent fire risk assessment indicates that all avoidable hazards have been addressed.

There are two rooms that are not currently used in the home and remain locked. There are plans for one of these rooms to be used as a sensory room, but it is on the third floor and there were no window restrictors in place, which presents a

significant hazard should children access these rooms in the future. This issue was addressed during the inspection and new window restrictors were fitted.

In one of the rooms, there was a cabinet with no lock that contained files with confidential information that should have been archived and made secure so that they cannot be accessed by anyone who should not have access to them.

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 provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. Regulation 27 (1)(a)(2)(a)(b)	13 May 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d)(e)	13 May 2024

This specifically refers to the need to recruit sufficient and suitably experienced staff to meet the needs of children and provide consistent care.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child Case records must be kept in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. Regulation 36 (1)(a)(2)(d)	13 May 2024
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably Regulation (6)(1)(a)(b)(2) (b)(vii) This specifically relates to the need to complete refurbishment work and create a suitable, homely environment for children to live in.	13 May 2024
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. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. Regulation 45(1)(2)(b)	13 May 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. In particular the bathrooms upstairs needs refurbishment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited, 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Lee Kirwin, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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