

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 accommodates up to three children with complex needs resulting from their early life experience. The provider has several homes in the area and offers additional therapeutic services and operates a school, which children may attend.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2016.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 August 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: 10 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/01/2018	Full	Good
17/01/2017	Full	Good
26/04/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
08/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— (a) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; (b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— (i) meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the boiler is maintained appropriately; and that there are sufficient numbers of plug sockets in each room.	01/10/2018
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (2) When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1)(2)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they obtain information in good time from relevant agencies in order to appropriately assess the suitability of the home's location.	01/10/2018
The registered person must ensure that— (a) the privacy of children is appropriately protected; (b) children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and (c) any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—	01/10/2018

(i) is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; (ii) is necessary and proportionate; (iii) is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and (iv) allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that— a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (2)(c))	01/10/2018

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 regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 10.24)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that they monitor all areas of health and safety matters to a satisfactory standard.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that they appropriately assess the risks of living near to the sea for each child.
- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the Quality Standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus

on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A stable group of children have lived here for some time. They make good progress, they are proud of their surroundings and they develop a sense of belonging here. All children said that one of the best things about living here are the staff, who they like and trust.

The staff know children well and consistently use their knowledge to develop and review the support that they provide. One professional said of a child that the staff, 'support his strengths, know him really well and, as a new social worker for the child, have helped me to understand him.'

Education is promoted successfully. All children go to school regularly and are achieving well. They are looking forward to the new term, which staff are preparing them well for. There are regular plans to help children's learning, such as regular reading sessions in the evenings.

There is a balanced approach to supporting children to develop individual interests and social networks outside the home with spending time together.

While this group of children remains young the staff support them to develop their independence. The staff are aware that children will shortly be wanting greater freedom. They are helping children to learn how to keep safe in the community and online. It is good to note that plans are pertinent to each child, for example the one for the youngest child differs to those for the older children.

Children's views are valued and sought regularly. This results in children developing self-confidence. In one case, a child co-chaired his review. Children's meetings are held regularly. The meetings cover a wide range of subjects and note whether children agree or disagree with decisions made. Actions noted in the minutes are not reviewed at the next meeting. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that children see how their views make a difference.

Health needs are identified well, and children develop healthy and active lifestyles. Children participate in therapy if appropriate. They are also encouraged to take part in regular physical activities which they enjoy.

The record of medication administration is poor. Staff did not identify that they were incorrectly recording a child's medication in the 22 days leading up to the inspection. The child did receive the correct dose of medication each day. However, staff's actions demonstrate a lack of attention, which in other circumstances could result in misadministration of medication.

The home environment is homely and child-friendly. While there are some minor areas of repair needed, these have been logged with the organisation's maintenance team. There are good plans to update areas of the home, with a new kitchen being planned to be fitted in the autumn. However, the boiler requires urgent attention to prevent it from pumping hot water through radiators whenever water is heated.

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

Children's safety is promoted by a staff team that understands children's individual risks. Staff make appropriate referrals to safeguarding agencies and managers investigate appropriately any concerns about staff performance.

Staff effectively support children to behave well. Children develop better ways of managing their emotions. As a result, there is little use of restraint, and no child had gone missing for some time. Any concern about bullying is quickly dealt with.

The reward scheme supports children to engage well in achieving change. They develop self-esteem and know what they are doing well. One professional said that she considered the reward system had helped a child to change his attitude and behaviour since coming to live here.

Frequent well-thought-out discussions between staff and children are carefully recorded. The discussion records cover concerns and things that children are doing well. The staff quickly follow up negative changes of behaviour with children, which helps to stop these behaviours from escalating.

Risk assessments are thorough and followed in practice. Together the staff develop behaviour management strategies. The strategies provide good detail of actions that the staff are expected to take. The home is within walking distance from a beach. The generic risk assessment about the sea coast lacks some important detail about some issues, such as the arrival of a new child or what should be considered when a child has free time in the community.

The location assessment lacks information about the area where the home is located. It is reviewed annually. Requests for information from local services have been made. Their lack of response means that the staff do not have up-to-date knowledge about the area. There is no evidence of any attempts to chase this information or consideration of how else this might be sought. Decisions about how to manage children's growing independence are therefore impacted by this lack of detail.

During the inspection, the lounge and games room were locked at certain times, such as overnight. This does not fit with the homely ethos that the staff try to create and means that children's access to their home is unnecessarily restricted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has a strong vision for the home and puts children's safety and welfare at the centre of his practice. He knows the strengths of the service and monitors care effectively.

Professional working relationships are established well and valued. One professional was impressed with the manager's input to a decision about the choice of foster carers for a child moving on.

There is a small staff team that receives appropriate and frequent supervision. The staff work as a unified team whose members communicate well and are prepared to both challenge and support each other. This united approach is acknowledged by children who say that they can approach any of their carers if they have a worry.

The quality of leaders' and managers' monitoring of health and safety matters varies. Fire checks are up to date and completed regularly. Extension cables are used in some rooms because there are insufficient numbers of sockets. The latest fire risk assessment from February 2018 had not been read and a response to the recommendation had not been made.

The manager is now regularly completing six-monthly reports on the quality of care. These are very detailed but lack analysis and evaluation. Children's, families' and professionals' views of the home are also not utilised in the review.

Training plans are well organised, and the staff confirm that their training is frequent and helpful. Staff have completed or are undertaking an appropriate qualification within appropriate timescales. They can reflect on how training has positively supported their practice, for example by providing them with different strategies to manage children's behaviour and to de-escalate situations.

Children have a variety of contact with their family and friends. Staff training to understand how to support children's relationships with their families forms part of general training. Staff said that some of their learning occurs as they supervise contact. Managers do not assess whether a member of staff has the skills and knowledge to supervise children's contact with their family. This is a missed opportunity to check that a member of staff's skills meets the needs of this aspect of their role.

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

Ruth Coler: social care inspector

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