

SC023744

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three children with social, emotional and/or mental health needs. It is privately owned and part of a larger company, which has several similar homes in the area. The company also operates a school, registered with Ofsted.

There has been no registered manager since 8 August 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, Ofsted suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 24 February 2021.

Ofsted last visited this setting on 3 November 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 September 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: 10 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2020	Full	Good
08/01/2019	Full	Good
01/06/2017	Full	Good
16/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The needs and vulnerabilities of the children are carefully considered by the manager before they move in. This helps staff to give the children a positive start and helps them to settle and build relationships with staff. The resulting sense of security and belonging helps the children to overcome deficits in their development and make progress with their education. They also have fun.

The records of the children's experiences and progress are detailed, illuminating, and speak loudly of the staff's care and affection for the children. The records speak about the children with positivity and enthusiasm. The records show pride in the children's achievements and how they overcome issues that slow their progress. The attachments that the children form with members of staff provide the bedrock for their progress. Staff, however, do not adequately consider the likely effects of a new child moving into the home on those already there. At times, this has led to some avoidable friction between children and has undermined stability in the home.

A new child has settled quickly. Close and determined collaboration between the staff, the placing authority and education services has enabled him to start the new school year in a mainstream school. The child is engaging in his learning and his life opportunities have expanded.

A social worker expressed great satisfaction and appreciation for the consistent, individualised and high-quality care being provided for the child placed by her authority. She praised the child's progress in becoming more involved in the decisions about his care, and for his first-time participation in a recent placement review.

Some children become more suited for foster care or to places nearer to their families. These moves are planned with thought and care, and in close co-operation with the relevant external agencies. This helps the children to prepare for change, experience positive endings, maintain ties important to them, and to have new, positive beginnings.

The children are relaxed in their environment and show investment in their home. Their bedrooms are personalised, and the living areas decorated with their artwork and photographs of memorable occasions. This increases the children's sense of permanence and belonging and contributes to building fond memories. Large outdoor areas have, however, not been developed and are not being used by the children. Opportunities to increase the atmosphere of a family home have been lost.

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

The structure, routine and consistent boundaries applied by staff help the children to feel secure. Combined with the warmth and care in their relationships with staff, this

also makes the children feel safe and cared about. Their need to test boundaries and question the staff's commitment to them reduces. In the last six months, no children have gone missing and incidents of staff needing to use restrictive practices have become rare. General incidents of disruption in the home have reduced substantially during this period.

The children's particular areas of risk and vulnerability are well identified and understood by the staff. Clear, written plans guide the staff's response on what to do when an incident occurs, such as a child going missing. In many instances, however, the written plans stop short and provide little or no guidance on preventative measures.

Staff are well-practised in current areas of threat and risk posed from outside the home, such as grooming and exploitation. Staff actively educate the children about the dangers these pose and how to protect themselves. The children are also encouraged and supported to take risks appropriate to their understanding. These practices in the home help to make the children safer and more able to protect themselves from hazards and threats.

There are no significant hazards identified in the home and all health and safety checks are regularly carried out. Fire safety practice is strong and fire drills are carried out as required. Each child's emergency evacuation needs have been considered. These practices add further to the safe care of the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A change in the leadership and management of the home has been executed with care and consideration for maintaining the stability and continuity of care of the children. Records show that the children have remained settled during this period of change and have continued to make their expected progress. The leadership arrangements are stable, and the new manager has applied for registration with Ofsted.

The new and experienced manager has a clear vision for the further development of the home and the staff team. This includes increasing the therapeutic effect that staff have in delivering care to the children.

Staff report being well supported by leaders and managers and speak with positivity about their care roles. The quality of staff supervision is good and annual appraisals are meaningful. Staff speak positively about each other and value the team-working ethic of the home.

Staff value the contributions that the children can make to the running and improvement of the home and are creative in the way that they seek their views, wishes and feelings. This has emboldened the children to speak out and become more involved in decisions about their care.

As a whole, the staff team shows ambition and enthusiasm for the service and what the children can achieve.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))	8 December 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that outdoor areas are designed and maintained to the same good standard as the rest of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff work closely with the placing authority to understand the child's relationship history and the impact that the child's arrival may have on the group living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.3)

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: SC023744

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

John Pledger, Social Care Inspector

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