

SC023744

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company and provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 31 January 2024.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 December 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be 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 is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 3 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2024	Full	Good
08/08/2023	Full	Good
22/08/2022	Full	Good
07/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

This area has been judged as 'requires improvement' due to shortfalls in the decision-making of leaders and managers. Organisational staffing challenges have resulted in periods of insufficient staffing in the home. Decisions to temporarily redeploy staff to other homes have caused some periods of inconsistency for children and their experiences of care and support.

Children's opportunities to engage in activities outside of the home have been limited. When staffing levels are sufficient, children enjoy a range of positive experiences including going on holidays, trampolining and swimming. However, on several occasions, children have had planned activities cancelled due to staff being moved to other services. Lone working arrangements have meant that children have been unable to engage in the activities of their choice.

Children have built trusting and secure relationships with the staff who are looking after them. However, inconsistency in staffing has impacted on children's emotional wellbeing and feelings of stability, with some changes to children's behaviours as they seek out support and care.

Managers have been unable to maintain systems to ensure that cleanliness levels are maintained consistently and that repairs are completed. Since the last inspection, children's rooms have been decorated in the colours that they have chosen, and children are supported to clean their rooms. However, the level of cleanliness in other areas of the home is below expected standards.

Children continue to make good progress in education. Managers advocate for children to make sure that appropriate education provisions are allocated. They work with education providers to ensure that the children are able to access the right educational provision. As a result, children are attending full time and enjoy going to school.

Children are supported to spend time with their families and friends and other people who are important to them, such as previous foster carers.

Staff know the children well and are keen to help them to develop a positive sense of identity. They reflect with the children on their experiences and development and help the children to sensitively learn about their families and their history, culture and heritage.

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

Staff know the children well and are skilled at managing and anticipating their behaviour. Consequences are not routinely used. When they have been used, they have been appropriate and proportionate in helping children to understand the consequences of their actions.

The level of incidents in the home is low. There have been rare occasions when children have engaged in behaviours that are potentially harmful. Staff have taken a considered approach to conversations, creating a culture in which children can be open about what is happening in their lives. Through these conversations, staff are developing an understanding of children's worlds outside of the home.

Risk assessments and behaviour support plans are of a good standard. They help to inform staff practice and are reflective of the children's needs. Guidance to staff on what action to take to respond to children's known risks is clear.

There have been no incidents of children going missing. Children are settled and do not want to go missing from the home. Staff have a good understanding of 'missing' protocols and know what to do should a child go missing from the home. Since the last inspection, the manager has implemented a system for reviewing information from return home interviews. As a result, the manager feels prepared to monitor any trends and patterns in incidents of children going missing from the home.

Feedback from professionals is positive. The manager and staff are described as being strong advocates for the children. They ensure that the children's voices are heard. The manager has been proactive in sourcing therapeutic services for children to help them to make sense of significant changes in their lives. This has ensured that children receive the support that they need to feel safe and supported during difficult times.

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

Leaders and managers have not maintained effective systems to monitor and have oversight of the quality of care for children. Monitoring systems that are in place to review care planning and incidents have not identified the existing shortfalls that require attention.

Records for monitoring the deployment of staff have not been maintained in line with regulatory requirements. An accurate staffing roster to ensure an exact record of which staff have worked in the home and the frequency of lone working arrangements has not been maintained.

Leaders have been unable to identify suitable solutions to prevent repeated recurrence of lone working and to reduce its impact on children. A policy not to use external staffing resources has resulted in employed staff being stretched beyond capacity. Placing authorities have not been adequately informed of the frequency of lone working in the home.

Senior leaders have not been visible and present for staff and children. There have been challenges for staff in raising their concerns directly to senior leaders. However, there has been a recent change of area manager and this is being received positively by staff, who are valuing their increased presence.

The registered manager has been a supportive and visible presence for staff, children, families and professionals. Their commitment to the home, the children and the team has helped to encourage the same level of commitment from staff. As a result, staff have remained committed to children and their role, even when there have been organisational challenges.

Staff receive good-quality supervision. Supervision takes place regularly and focuses on the areas that matter most to children. Staff also have opportunities at team meetings to share their views on the home and the support provided to children. As a result of this, staff feel valued by the manager of the home.

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, The 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 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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(d)(e)(f))	1 February 2026
The records standard sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date.	1 February 2026

(Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))

In particular, the registered must ensure that they maintain a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children's needs. In most cases, children's homes should be homely, domestic environments. This specifically relates to ensuring that the home, its furnishings and resources are maintained to an acceptable state of cleanliness. ('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: 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: Gareth Hopper

Inspectors

Gemma Bullen, Social Care Inspector

Georgia Carty, Social Care Inspector

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