

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 who have social, emotional and/or mental health needs. It is privately owned and part of a larger company which has a number of similar homes in the area. Children may attend one of the schools which are run by the company.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 5 March 2012.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 March 2020

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 requires improvement to be good.

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/01/2019	Full	Good
01/06/2017	Full	Good
16/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/11/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The small, child-focused staff team works well together. Staff are a passionate and motivated group who are good role models for the children in their care. Children who are settled in the home have made good progress and built secure relationships and trust with staff. Children who have recently arrived are settling well and are beginning to establish relationships with staff.

Staff consistently support children using clear routines and boundaries. They encourage each child to take part in a variety of community-based activities which they choose and enjoy. Their physical and emotional well-being benefits, as well as their confidence and self-esteem. Some children have developed new interests and hobbies while making friends and having new experiences. Staff ensure that children are fully involved in decisions about the home. Children give their views through the regular house meetings, key-work sessions and daily conversations that occur. However, staff do not consistently detail the child's voice in their plans.

Staff support and encourage children to develop awareness in how they meet their own emotional and physical healthcare needs. Staff refer children to specialist health services when necessary and seek specialist therapeutic support and intervention when needed. Staff have not considered how to support a child who is struggling with their own basic care needs. Children have been well supported to address long-standing health needs which were previously not met.

Children are well supported by staff to engage in and attend school. Those who have previously struggled with education now have good attendance. When children are struggling at school, staff are quick to meet with school staff and review how they can collectively support children to overcome any difficulties.

Staff support children to maintain relationships with family and friends. Staff work closely with children and their families to ensure that this time is a positive and safe experience for all. When appropriate, staff arrange for visits to take place in the home or via electronic devices with family members who live a distance away from the home.

Children have been well prepared and supported to move in and out of the home. When placements have ended earlier than originally planned, there are clear reasons and rationales why this has occurred. Managers and staff have worked well with others to ensure that moves are positive and in the best interest of children. Staff share the children's guide to the home with children prior to arrival, but there is a lack of evidence to support that this guide had been shared. The language in the guide is not child friendly and it doesn't inform children about the use of night-time door monitors.

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

Managers and staff have a good understanding and knowledge about risk and potential risk factors. They respond in a timely way to concerns when these arise through effective reporting and referral to safeguarding agencies. Staff are vigilant

and help and support children to keep safe through regular conversations. Staff share relevant advice and guidance with them.

Staff respond well to episodes of children going missing and follow agreed plans. They work well with other specialist services to ensure a collective, considered and agreed approach that best manages risk. Plans are detailed and up to date, providing practical advice and guidance that supports staff to consistently meet children's needs and manage risk. However, one plan does not explicitly detail the speed of response when a child is not in contact with staff.

Staff regularly educate, advise and guide children about the impact of risk-taking behaviours. Some children complete the e-learning programme to supplement knowledge and understanding about keeping safe in the home and community.

Managers respond to and investigate complaints from children and others. Outcomes are provided, and this means that the views of children, and others, are respected and listened to.

Staff follow the home's agreed approach to behaviour management. Children's care plans detail how best to support a child to calm when anxious, upset or worried. Staff use a variety of de-escalation strategies that avoid physical intervention. When staff do use physical intervention, it is as a last resort. Records detail what occurred before an incident, during and afterwards. Staff use two systems to log and record incidents. Some of these vary in detail, quality and consistency which impacts negatively on the quality of the monitoring, review and critical evaluation of interventions. On occasions, the manager has reviewed incidents which she was involved in, and this also impacts negatively on her ability to critically evaluate records.

Staff do talk with children following an incident, but records do not evidence that a child was asked how they felt about the measure or that they were encouraged to explore what they may do differently next time. Staff record their words and not the child's voice in these records. Staff use a variety of reparative consequences that support children to learn more positive ways to respond in difficult situations.

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

Leaders and managers have not ensured that their monitoring and review systems are thorough, robust or critically evaluative. Managers do not routinely evidence that they explore what has gone well and what they may do differently next time to inform staff practice and development. An example of this is the night-time door monitors on all children's bedroom doors. Managers have not reviewed their use or staff practice assuring themselves that children need them. Similarly, managers have not considered if their use is solely to support staff in their management of children.

The manager has clarity and understanding of the home's strengths and weakness and areas that she wishes to develop and further improve. The home development plan is detailed and reviewed annually, though the manager has not reviewed the previous targets identified to ascertain if these have been achieved. The plan is due for review and the manager identified during the inspection many areas of the home

which require decoration and refurbishment to ensure that the home is well presented and homely.

The staff team is small and, on occasions, staff work additional hours to address gaps when there is staff absence. This provides consistency and stability to children, though careful and regular review of this is required to ensure that this is within staff capability and isn't impacting negatively on staff performance. There was a high turnover of staff in the home last year. This did have a negative effect on children who were worried, but staff reassured them and minimised this. Leaders and managers were swift to address this and quickly sourced experienced staff to the home and the staff team is now stable. Managers apply robust safer recruitment processes.

All staff access regular and effective supervision and have annual appraisals. Staff have access to a wide variety of training that is relevant to their roles. All staff have achieved the required qualification and those within their induction and probation period are well supported to develop and progress their skills.

Leaders, managers and staff form positive working relationships with other professionals. They regularly meet with others to review children's care, needs and plans to consider the most appropriate way to support children to progress, and request reviews when they are concerned that children are not progressing.

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
Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	01/05/2020

Recommendations

- In some instances, a child may express wishes that are not always in their best interests or which may conflict with the views of other children in the home. In such circumstances, the responsible adults will have to balance the wishes of the child against what they judge to be in the best interests of the child and reach a reasonable view about the best way forward in the interests of all. The reasons for reaching any decision will need to be carefully explained to and understood by the child or children concerned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.9)
- The children's home must produce a children's guide. The children's guide must be made available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency) and must be age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to

make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)

- Where there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children's home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. If the child is looked-after, their care plan (arranged by their placing authority) should include such a strategy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.24)
- Any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. In some cases, children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than 5 days after the incident of restraint (regulation 35(3)(c)). Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. Children should be offered the opportunity to access an advocacy support to help them with this (regulation 7(2)(b)(iii)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.60)
- 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)

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: Donna Gallagher

Inspector

Amanda Maxwell, Her Majesty's Inspector

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