

SC023745

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 owned by a private company that operates several other children's homes in the area. It provides care for up to 3 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2025.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 4 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
18/03/2024	Full	Good
17/10/2022	Full	Outstanding
01/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff provide warm and consistent support to children. This creates a sense of stability and safety. As a result, children become more confident and make strong progress from very difficult starting points. Children who have experienced huge instability in their early years have found a loving home and formed deep and trusting relationships with staff.

Staff help children understand their feelings and manage them day to day. This support builds children's confidence and independence. Children who once avoided and distrusted adults now engage openly and feel secure. Children talk with pride about their achievements and progress.

Staff use clear routines and simple boundaries to help children manage their behaviours. This helps children feel more settled and reduces moments of crisis. Staff have stuck by children through some difficult times, providing excellent support and guidance to help them get back on their feet.

Staff work carefully with families to balance hopes for the future with each child's need for stability. This shared planning ensures that decisions move at a safe pace. As a result, children are protected from sudden changes and experience steady, safe progress.

Staff maintain strong links with education providers and notice small changes in children's emotions or behaviours. For one child, this close attention has helped them return to learning at a pace that feels manageable. The child's attendance has improved, and they receive frequent positive praise and achievement awards from the school.

Staff encourage children to participate in new experiences and build practical life skills. This includes activities in the community, support with daily tasks, and guidance about personal safety. These actions help children build confidence, develop new interests and prepare for future independence.

Staff create a warm, safe and well-maintained home environment. Personalised bedrooms and inviting shared spaces help children feel valued and comfortable. Regular improvements, including outdoor play areas, give children more chances to explore, play and enjoy sensory and physical activities. This consistent attention to the environment enhances children's daily experiences and strengthens their emotional wellbeing.

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

Staff respond quickly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns. When necessary, they share information with schools, social workers and police to keep everyone informed. This coordinated approach ensures that risks are understood early and managed consistently, which strengthens children's safety at home and in the community.

Staff spend focused time with children to help them understand risks linked to friendships, unsafe adults, substance misuse and online contact. They use simple conversations and clear guidance to build awareness. This patient work helps children reflect on past incidents and supports them in making safer choices over time.

Leaders manage allegations with care and have effective procedures. They work with safeguarding partners to plan investigations and ensure that each step is fair and thorough. These actions protect children, support transparency and reduce the risk of unsafe situations happening again.

Staff monitor children's emotions closely and adjust routines to reduce risk. They provide structure, safe adults and planned activities when children spend time in the community. This supervision reduces missing-from-home incidents and helps children move around the local area more safely.

Leaders promote a culture where staff feel able to raise concerns and seek guidance. They expect open conversations about safeguarding and model this in daily practice. This approach helps staff respond consistently and ensures that children receive reliable protection.

Staff work with children to understand patterns of risk, including situations that have led to going missing or unsafe contact. They review incidents, update plans and agree on clear boundaries with the wider network. This joint work reduces risk, strengthens children's understanding of safety and helps them feel supported while in the community.

Leaders and staff manage family contact with close oversight. They act quickly if any concerns arise and increase supervision to keep children safe. They work with partner agencies to agree on clear arrangements, restore consistency and prevent any unsafe situations. This careful planning creates predictable routines and helps children rebuild relationships in a safe way.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has demonstrated exceptional foresight in responding to a year filled with significant changes and challenges. The manager has strong oversight and understanding of the needs of children and his staff team.

The manager develops the team well, increasing the availability of experienced senior staff and encouraging staff to reflect on their practice. These actions have created a highly stable environment where staff feel supported and children experience consistent, thoughtful care.

The registered manager acts decisively to enhance care practice. The manager sets clear expectations, reinforces accountability and re-energises the team's professional focus.

This clear direction strengthens staff's confidence and ensures that every child receives proactive, high-quality support.

Staff say there is a healthy and mature working culture where they feel comfortable constructively challenging each other and leaders. They address communication issues, clarify work boundaries and nurture cooperative relationships. This unity creates a calmer, more predictable environment that directly benefits children.

Staff consistently report feeling valued and well supported. They experience clear supervision, meaningful feedback and coaching, which builds their skills and confidence. As a result, staff are motivated, purposeful and committed to delivering excellent care.

The registered manager leads a culture rooted in openness, trust and emotional warmth. Staff feel safe challenging practice, sharing ideas and seeking help when needed. This culture strengthens resilience, nurtures staff wellbeing and ensures that children are supported by a confident and emotionally secure team.

The registered manager shows exceptional skill in navigating complex family circumstances. The manager works closely with partner agencies to support families in reconnecting with their children. This strong oversight protects children from unmanaged risk and supports steady, positive progress even in highly challenging situations.

The registered manager maintains a sharp and strategic focus on understanding potential risks, service development and the home environment. The manager adjusts staffing to match children's needs, invests in training, maintains high standards in the physical environment and continually reviews improvement plans. These actions create a safe, well-led home where children's voices shape daily life and where progress is nurtured with care, consistency and ambition.

The registered manager reviews service development plans regularly and produces clear, accountable actions, although some documents now require updating to reflect recent progress. The registered manager recognises the need to refresh these plans to ensure that ongoing improvements remain purposeful and measurable. This reflective stance demonstrates a commitment to continuous development and transparent leadership.

The registered manager explores increasingly creative approaches to capturing children's views, acknowledging their reluctance to engage in formal participation. The registered manager uses children's preferences to influence daily planning and also seeks ways to strengthen their role in service development. This helps ensure that children's voices remain central, even when expressed subtly or inconsistently.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- 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 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: SC023745

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: Gareth Hopper

Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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