

SC023746

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 and run by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home has been without a registered manager since 7 March 2019.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 December 2019

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
23/10/2017	Full	Good
22/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/06/2016	Full	Good

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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry). (Regulation 40 (4)(d)(i)(ii))	20/02/2020

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
In particular, ensure that records are signed, and dated by the supervisor and supervisee.
- Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children living at this home make good progress. Caring relationships between the staff and the children help them to develop trust and a belief that the staff genuinely care for them. The children enjoy a sense of community and mutual support from each other and from the staff.

Children's views are important to the staff. Staff listen and respond to their wishes and feelings. Children said that they can talk to anyone in the organisation if they have any worries or complaints. When complaints are made, they are taken seriously and responded to quickly. As a result, the children experience being heard and know that their voice counts.

Staff encourage and support the children to pursue their individual interests. One child has a pet hamster, which is incredibly well looked after. Staff plan for activities that they know the children will enjoy, as well as encouraging new opportunities. Children enjoy spending leisure time in the local community. Staff recognise that clubs and fun activities enhance the children's lived experience and well-being.

Children receive well-thought-through support to increase their social and independence skills. For one child, this involves helping bake cakes. Another child cooks a meal once a week for everyone. The child's social worker described him as 'coming on in leaps and bounds' since living at the home. Staff support the children to develop independent living skills at a pace and level that match their understanding and ability. This helps the children grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Managers took timely action when it became evident that the staff could not meet a child's needs. They communicated effectively with the child's placing authority to ensure that prompt action was taken in the best interests of the child.

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

A serious safeguarding incident has occurred at the setting since the last inspection. Robust and proactive action was taken by the manager and leaders to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

Staff have a good knowledge of the children's strengths and vulnerabilities. Staff sensitively develop the children's awareness to danger through direct work, informal conversations and positive role modelling. Children said that they felt safe living at the home and enjoy the care and support that they receive.

Personalised plans and targeted support for children address specific risks and provide guidance for the staff to take necessary actions to reduce harm. Care planning is detailed and clearly sets out the differing needs of the children. The consistent approach taken by the staff contributes to improvements in the children's behaviour.

Children are relaxed in the staff's company and are confident to share their feelings and future aspirations. Staff encourage the children to have an input into their care planning. This ensures that they have a say in their future. While the children's records are mostly of a good quality, some staff have used unhelpful language to describe the children's behaviour.

Staff follow procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of children. However, a shortfall was found in relation to Ofsted not being notified of a reportable incident. The child was not put at risk by this, as all other safeguarding processes were followed and the concerns were addressed. This is a repeat requirement from the previous inspection.

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

The current manager has recently withdrawn her application to register with Ofsted. This has left the home without a registered manager since March 2019. Nevertheless, the area manager has provided strong day-to-day oversight during this period. This has helped to ensure stability and continuity for the children. The area manager and leaders recognise the urgent need for a permanent manager to be appointed, and they have plans in hand to address this.

Strong attachments have evolved between the children and key members of the staff team. While forming positive relationships with the children is central to the staff practice, the strength and competing natures of some of these relationships have been disruptive to the group dynamics. The manager has made efforts to address this. However, some undercurrents remain. This continues as an area of development for the staff team.

Staff said that they are well supported by the manager and leaders. Records show that staff receive regular supervision and they are encouraged to reflect on their practice. However, the quality of supervision records is variable, and they are not always signed.

The area manager and current manager recognise the strengths of the service and they have identified areas for development. They are prioritising the ongoing development of the staff to address any weakness in practice and to inspire high-quality care.

Staff and the managers advocate strongly and passionately for the children. A social worker spoke highly about the efforts made on behalf of the children by the staff team. Consequently, children trust the staff and feel that they act in their best interests.

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: SC023746

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, social care inspector

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