

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 which also runs other children's homes in the local area. This home provides care for up to three children with emotional and social difficulties. There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2024.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 May 2025

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: 4 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/06/2024	Full	Good
11/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/07/2023	Full	Inadequate
27/03/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff take the time to understand each child's background and unique needs, using this understanding to adapt the care provided. As a result of this individualised approach, support is more effective and contributes towards the positive progress that the children are making. This includes progress in areas such as education, independence and emotional well-being.

Children have positive relationships with the staff who support them. The children describe staff as 'the best', 'excellent' and 'just perfect'. They say this because they feel cared for and listened to, believing that the staff invest time and effort in understanding what is important to them.

Staff use both natural and planned discussions to seek the children's wishes and feelings. They act on these, when possible, to ensure the children have a say in the care provided to them.

When appropriate and safe to do so, staff actively promote the children's relationships with their family and other people who are important to them. Staff communicate directly with family members to arrange family time and routinely take children and supervise their time with family.

Activities in and out of the home are strongly encouraged by the staff. The staff support the children to follow a range of hobbies and to attend activities in the community. This gives the children the opportunity to have new experiences, while also engaging in activities that are of interest to them.

Children enjoy living in the home and said they want to remain living there until they reach adulthood. The children refer to a family environment, with the staff promoting traditions on special occasions such as Christmas and birthdays. Staff ensure time is spent together eating meals, playing games or doing crafts. As a result, the children share special memories of their time in the home.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home and two children have moved out. The children receive information and spend time with staff and the other children in the home before moving in. This allows the children the preparation time needed to better manage this change. Staff try, when possible, to support the children to move on from the home in a planned way. Staff recognise the importance for the children of having positive endings and endeavour to ensure this is provided.

Staff make sure the home is clean and comfortable for the children to live in. The children have nice bedrooms and are consulted about how they would like their rooms to be decorated. The home has lots of areas that support communal activities and family living. Some of the decor in the home, however, looks tired and some maintenance is

required. These issues somewhat take away from the homely environment staff are working hard to create.

Staff are providing day care to a child who lives in another of the organisation's homes. Although initially a relaxed arrangement, this has more recently developed, with a plan for the child to spend a significant amount of time at the home. The managers and staff were not clear of the objectives of this arrangement and which home, and staff team, was responsible for the overall care and record-keeping for the child.

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

Staff have a solid understanding of the individual and universal risks that exist for all the children. The children said they feel safe where they live and credit this sense of safety to the care and support staff provide. The children can share any concerns they have and express confidence that staff will listen and take any action needed.

Staff know the steps required of them should any safeguarding concern arise. In addition to this, they are guided by the individual risk assessments and support plans that are in place for each child.

Children rarely go missing from the home. On the occasions when they have, staff have been proactive and creative in establishing their whereabouts and seeking their return. When the children return to the home, staff ensure they provide a caring and welcoming response and ask supportive but curious questions to establish any well-being concerns.

Staff excel in educating the children about potential risks. There is a strong emphasis placed on staff educating the children to support their safety. Staff teach the children about risks such as the internet and possible exploitation. Because of this support, staff, children and partnering professionals all agree that the children are more equipped to make safer choices for themselves.

Staff ensure there are clear rules in place, and as a result the children know the expectations around acceptable and safe behaviour. However, staff recognise all behaviour to be a form of communication and work with the children to find safer and healthier ways for them to express themselves. One parent spoke of the positive progress their child has made with their emotional well-being. The child echoed this view, and said, 'I don't get angry as much now. I talk about things more.'

Physical intervention is only used by staff as a last resort. When used, it is proportionate and undertaken by trained staff. All acts of restraint are reviewed and scrutinised by the manager, allowing any practice concerns to be quickly identified. Although staff and the children said medical attention and supportive discussions are routinely offered following any restraint, this is not consistently recorded.

There was an isolated incident when the manager reviewed a physical intervention that he was involved in. This practice is not in line with the home's restraint policy and did

not allow for independent oversight. This did not, however, have any impact on the child's safety or well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been a manager with the organisation since September 2021. The children and staff recognise that the manager plays an integral role in making the home an enjoyable place to live and work.

The children's families and professionals involved in their care described the manager and staff as being caring, helpful and approachable. They said they have positive and respectful relationships with the staff and are regularly updated and consulted. Additionally, one professional also praised the manager's ability to take timely autonomous action when needed, saying they have confidence in the manager's ability to make decisions based on the child's best interests.

The manager is a reflective and aspiring leader who has a good understanding of the home's strengths and the areas that require improvement. Through this understanding, the manager strives to address shortfalls identified to ensure the care provided is of a good standard.

The manager is committed to providing a positive work environment. As a result, staff enjoy coming into work. Staff feel well supported by the manager, who they describe as being approachable and accessible. The manager regularly works alongside the staff. This helps him to better understand any challenges, while also providing him with insight into the quality of care provided to the children. Staff share the manager's objective of wanting to provide good experiences to the children. This common goal ensures the approach to care is consistent and reliable.

The responsible individual delegates day-to-day oversight of the home to the area manager. Feedback from the area manager, along with the monthly reports completed by the home's independent visitor, informs the responsible individual's understanding of the quality of care provided to the children. Although the registered manager finds the advice and support of the independent visitor helpful, the quality of these reports is variable. The reports lack the required scrutiny and external feedback needed to provide a clear understanding of the children's care experiences.

Although highly experienced, the manager has not completed the required qualification by the relevant date. This has not had any negative effect on the children, or the care provided. The manager has confirmed plans to complete this in the next two months.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv) (c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they are clear on the overall plan for any child the home is providing care for. Staff should have a detailed understanding of the history and needs of all children and be clear about the expectations on them in relation to the care they provide. The registered person should ensure that the home is suitably furnished and that all maintenance tasks are completed in a timely manner.	13 June 2025

The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— 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 any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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 (1) (3)(a)(viii)(c)) In particular, the manager must ensure that medical assistance is provided and discussions are held with children and recorded following any use of physical restraint. Furthermore, all records should be subject to independent oversight, as detailed in the organisation's restraint policy.	6 June 2025
A person may only manage a children's home if— having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children— the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children. For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has by the relevant date, attained— the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 5 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing a home.	1 August 2025

(Regulation 28 (1)(b)(i) (2)(c)(i)(ii) (3)(a))	
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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 and 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: SC023746

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: Toby Marzetti-Mercer

Inspector

Kerry Howarth, Social Care Inspector

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