

SC030797

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care for up to nine children with social and emotional needs. At the time of the inspection, there were six children living in the home.

The manager of the home registered with Ofsted in May 2024.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

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: 11 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A restriction notice was issued following the last inspection to prevent any further children moving into the home and to allow for a period of stability. A monitoring visit was carried out on 31 October 2023 and the threshold for the restriction was no longer met. Therefore, it was not re-issued.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
21/03/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children feel safe in the home and enjoy positive relationships with staff. These relationships are central to children's progress and reducing incidents and risk. Parents and professionals share this view. Children receive good-quality care from staff who are dedicated to their role and responsibilities.

Children are supported to take age-appropriate risks and try new things. This is underpinned by good care planning, which is updated often and provides clear direction for staff. Two children now travel to school independently by public transport. The younger children attend and enjoy extra-curricular activities. As a result, children are developing their independence, social confidence and connections with friends and community.

Staff understand the individual needs of children well and support them to talk about their experiences of living in the home. They help children to make decisions about planning menus and activities. Staff are transparent in their concerns, aspirations and praise of children. This fosters natural and open communication.

Children are helped to spend time with their family and friends when appropriate. Staff manage this sensitively and engage children, their social workers and parents to guide these arrangements. As a result, one child is now able to spend extra time with their family and another is looking to move back to their family home.

Children make good progress in this home. All the children access education. Three children are engaged in therapeutic support. This is having a positive impact on their emotional well-being. Children say that they are happy at this home. One child said staff are 'the best'.

Staff value their relationships with children and speak proudly about their successes. Staff use an emotionally warm and nurturing approach with children.

Children enjoyed going on a summer holiday. For many children, this was their first such experience, and staff prepared them with sensitivity and creativity. For example, children were given a leaflet about where they were going, assuring them about when they were due to come back to the home. Once back home, children were given a photo book of their experiences.

Children benefit from home-made, balanced meals. Children often help to prepare and cook their meals. They can tailor their meals to their specific preferences or dietary needs without challenge or difficulty. This simple approach helps all children feel included and encourages them to develop their independence skills.

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

Children have established routines. This has contributed to children experiencing fewer periods of distress and reduced the frequency and duration of physical interventions. However, when physical interventions have been used, the records of these incidents are inconsistent. Records do not capture debriefs held with children to explore their well-being or include management oversight, to ensure that the intervention was necessary or appropriate.

Staff have a good understanding of children's individual vulnerabilities and what is needed to help them become safer. They are guided by risk assessments that are clear and updated regularly or following any significant incident.

Staff use online resources appropriately to support their discussions with children around relationships, friendships and online safety. However, the records relating to these discussions are not always written in a child-friendly way. For example, some language is adultifying and attributes choice or blame to children.

Staff are clear about their responsibility to keep children safe. They can identify areas of concern and demonstrate how they would report this to managers and external safeguarding partners.

The registered manager knows when to report safeguarding concerns. However, there are times when children are not consistently supported when a safeguarding concern is being addressed. In these instances, the responses from leaders and managers lack curiosity and do not go far enough to address practice issues or reduce the likelihood of future concerns.

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

Since the last inspection, a new manager has been appointed and registered. The registered manager is also the head of service for the organisation and oversees 14 other homes. The arrangements for the registered manager were intended to be a temporary measure, as a home manager was appointed at the same time with a view to them progressing to become the registered manager.

The home manager is in day-to-day charge of the home. The registered manager visits the home weekly and demonstrates a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. The registered manager and home manager speak proudly of children and have clear aspirations for their care. However, the registered manager is reliant on the home manager to provide them with daily feedback on allegations, safeguarding concerns and shortfalls in the operational running of the home. This happens on a formal basis through monthly supervision sessions and informally through daily phone discussions. The registered manager not being consistently present in the home and the information-sharing arrangements compromise the consistency of the home's leadership and management.

The arrangements for staff supervision are inconsistent. The registered manager provides regular supervision for the home manager. This is good-quality supervision that supports them in their role. The home manager and senior staff provide supervision sessions to staff. However, the registered manager does not have oversight of the quality and effectiveness of this supervision. Consequently, the registered manager was not aware that identified learning from allegations, staff conduct issues and practice concerns had not been addressed in staff supervision when actions had been set to do so. This means that these issues are not addressed with staff to enhance their learning and develop their practice.

The registered manager does not receive supervision and does not recognise the need or benefit of this in relation to his role. Furthermore, he has not had an annual appraisal.

The responsible individual has not visited the home in over a year. They are reliant on feedback from the registered manager and other statutory reviews to understand the progress and shortfalls of the home. The responsible individual is reliant on what they are told informally by the registered manager. This compromises their effectiveness and ability to fulfil their role.

The staff team is now established. In the main, there are sufficient staff to meet the needs of children and to manage their known risks. However, on one occasion, there were insufficient staff to meet these needs and enable staff to implement children's safety plans. This resulted in an incident occurring between two children.

Staff, children's family members and external professionals are not always clear on how the home operates. Although some report that there is positive and effective communication from senior staff, most are unclear who the manager of the home is, and two professionals are awaiting further updates following safeguarding concerns. One parent is unclear about who the staff are.

All children's bedrooms doors are fitted with alarms. However, there is no policy in place for their use. Bedroom door alarms are used for children new to the home as a blanket approach while their needs and risks are fully assessed. Despite no policy being in place, there are appropriate consents in place and the use of the door alarms is subject to individualised risk assessments.

Managers are developing processes to ensure that the ethos of the home is well embedded and that information about the children is shared effectively across the staff team.

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; 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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(d)(f)(h))	15 March 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees — receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	15 March 2025

In particular, the responsible individual must provide regular supervision to the registered manager.	
A responsible individual must have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b)) In particular, the responsible individual must ensure that they supervise the management of the home.	15 March 2025
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— 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)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	15 March 2025
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—	15 March 2025

protect and promote each child's welfare; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(v))	
---	--

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is a clear policy in relation to the use and monitoring of electronic alarms used on children's bedroom doors. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records are written in a way that is helpful to them. In particular, staff should record information relating to children in a child-focused way that is not stigmatising. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC030797

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: Gordon Shaw

Inspectors

Becky Paradise, Social Care Inspector
Sharron Dormand, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025