

SC030797

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 November 2017

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 10 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The staff team works well together to identify and meet children's individual needs from the moment a child arrives.
- Children's education and achievement are promoted and supported effectively.
- Good-quality monitoring of the safeguarding practice strengthens staff's abilities to protect children and develop children's abilities to keep themselves safe.
- The staff team successfully helps children to make changes that enable them to

talk about their feelings and control difficult behaviours better.

- Leaders and managers plan the development of the service effectively.
- The training and support for staff positively help them to look after children.
- Relationships with external professionals are developed and maintained well. Professionals are very positive about how the staff care for children and how they liaise with them about concerns and progress that children make.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The statement of purpose does not contain clear information about the ages and needs of the children and young people.
- A wooden building in the garden does not have a suitable fire safety alarm fitted.
- Several recommendations about improving practice are made, which can be viewed in the recommendations section of the report.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/06/2016	Full	Good
29/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/08/2015	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 compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16(1)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the statement of purpose clearly states the ages of children that the home caters for and how the staff will meet all needs a child has, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).	31/01/17
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— (a) take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25(1)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that an appropriate fire alarm is fitted to the wooden building in the garden.	31/12/17

Recommendations

- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13(2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards as described in regulations 5 to 14. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- In particular, the registered person must ensure that the six-monthly reports contain evidence of how managers seek and consider children's views and opinions when reviewing the care that they provide.
- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. Where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals and opportunities to sit together and

eat should be promoted. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8)

In particular, the registered person should review the arrangements for the evening meal to enable children and staff to sit together when practical.

- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need (regulation 31(1)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that any staff who supervise contact visits with family or friends have the skills, knowledge and capability to do so.

- The home should work in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that the staff write reward charts and one-to-one discussions (key working sessions) in a child-friendly language.

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.14)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that all the information they collect when deciding that a child should live here is recorded in each impact assessment. This includes any risks a child may pose to other children living here.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children thrive at this home from the time that they arrive. The staff empower children to participate in their care, initially by exploring with them what they want to achieve.

One social worker said that really good planning 'captured the child's needs and mapped out how the staff would support him. This helped the child to settle right away.' Children are continually encouraged to participate in the daily life of the home and make their views known.

Impact assessments are not as comprehensive as they could be. The assessments are completed before managers decide whether a child should come and live here. The decisions take account of a range of factors, but managers do not record all aspects of their assessment in the report. In particular, reports do not provide evidence of how managers have investigated and assessed the risks that a child may pose to the other children who live here. Managers improved the detail of a recently completed assessment at the time of inspection; this now contains the additional information used in order to reach their decision.

Sensitive and thoughtful planning supports children to engage positively with their education. The staff team successfully supports children to reintegrate into school if they have missed any education. A child who previously had a poor rate of attendance increased this to 100% in three months. The staff stay with a child at their school if necessary and have a clear education plan for any child who is not in school. Links with schools are good. Daily emails to and from the school assist the staff to know about issues that arise during the school day, and conversely for education staff to be aware of what may affect the child at school.

Good health and emotional well-being are understood and encouraged. The staff identify and manage any medication that a child may need. The staff advocated for medication which has assisted a child to manage her behaviour better. Where specialist help is required, staff have good links to ensure that this is available when needed. The staff encourage children to include physical activity in their daily lives.

Children's enjoyment of life is promoted well. They attend differing clubs and activities and have relevant toys and learning materials at the home. However, mealtimes do not always promote a sociable family environment where children and staff can sit together. The ways in which mealtimes are organised mean that the environment is at times noisy and chaotic, while clear enough expectations about what is expected of children are not provided.

The staff support children to have appropriate levels of contact with their family. The staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities during contact vary. However, managers take suitable action to develop staff practice when it is required.

Care is taken to help children have good experiences if they leave the home. Managers understand and plan sensitively and effectively with other professionals to prepare all concerned for a child to move on. This promotes a smooth transition for a child.

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

The staff nurture children's development and encourage a warm and supportive environment, which provides appropriate boundaries for children to develop.

The staff know how to protect children well. The staff are able to use their safeguarding

knowledge appropriately in different situations and work effectively with other agencies to identify and minimise risk of harm. One member of staff identified safeguarding concerns during contact for vulnerable members of the family as well as the child. These were subsequently acted on appropriately.

The management team has increased the organisation's auditing systems in relation to safeguarding children. For example, managers have issued a new supervision form to include a section on safeguarding at each supervision and made safeguarding a standard item at each managers' meeting. Professionals are confident of staff's abilities to protect children and help children to protect themselves.

Risk assessments are detailed and well written, providing the staff with good guidance on how to manage particular concerns. Children are involved in drawing up the risk assessment and make comments, which are recorded at the end. This assists children to be fully involved in planning their care. The location assessment identifies that the home is situated within a short walking distance from a beach, but no risk assessments are available. These were completed during the inspection and further plans were made to increase young people's awareness of the local beaches.

Children's positive behaviour is successfully promoted and assisted. Senior managers work with the staff team to understand the underlying causes for difficult behaviour and help children to manage their emotions more effectively. One child's behaviour has significantly improved over the last six months. In particular, the number of restraints for this child had reduced from 10 to three. Records of restraints are recorded well and children know when staff would use restraint. One child said, 'Staff only hold you if they have to.'

Sanctions are fair and assist children to reflect on their behaviour. One independent reviewing officer gave positive feedback about how a sanction had helped prevent a child from frequently going missing. The staff provide lots of opportunities to discuss why the child went missing and develop a level of trust which meant that his free time could be reinstated.

Reward systems relate to the particular needs and interests that children have. The way rewards are written are not clear or child friendly. This decreases how consistently the staff apply the same criteria to meeting the agreed goals. It does not help children to fully understand and, therefore, be able to meet their goals.

Health and safety checks are managed well. For instance, fire evacuations are regularly undertaken and fire records are appropriately kept. However, there are no fire safety warning systems fitted in the wooden games room in the garden.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers drive improvement and increase staff's abilities to focus and reflect on what makes a difference to children. The registered manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He has a clear plan of how to achieve his aims to develop the service. The management team has focused on developing team skills, ensuring that care provided meets children's needs and creates stability for them. The manager now intends to move his focus to record-keeping and

monitoring and reviewing systems, which he acknowledges need more attention.

The statement of purpose does not accurately reflect the children's needs and, therefore, how the staff team can meet their needs. For example, it is ambiguous about the age range of children who the home caters for. The six-monthly reports about the quality of services provided also lack any information about children's views and do not consistently evaluate how staff practice makes a difference to children. These are missed opportunities to ensure that these documents fully support and evaluate how the staff have made a difference to children that they care for.

Sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified staff are on duty each day. The managers monitor and regularly review staffing levels and individual staff working patterns. Each situation is given due consideration and managers take full account of how to provide consistent care which benefits children.

Training is effective. The staff know how training courses improve their practice, and can appreciate how their feedback about the courses that they attend can improve training programmes.

Supervision quality is good, but its frequency varies. Full-time staff receive regular recorded supervision which covers their individual needs. Supervision for one part-time staff member was not sufficiently frequent.

Professionals are very positive about how the staff work with them to meet children's needs. The staff provide regular communication about progress and issues of concerns. The staff write timely, detailed reports for reviews and regularly attend any meeting arranged. One social worker said, 'They know [child's name] well and support his individuality.'

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: 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: Sidney Coffin

Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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