

SC063116

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 provides care for up to six children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Currently, all the children are boys aged between seven and 10 years old. Staff in this home are referred to as 'adults'.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in February 2012.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 16 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2022

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	outstanding

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

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2019	Full	Outstanding
26/02/2018	Full	Outstanding
30/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/05/2016	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good care and make progress while living in this home. Excellent leadership from the registered manager means that the adults are child-focused and work effectively as a team. Children enjoy warm and positive relationships with the adults. A child said, 'The best thing is, there is always someone there for you.'

All the children attend a nearby primary school which is operated by the same organisation. All the children have full-time attendance and are making positive progress with their learning. One child has recently been successful in his bid to join the school council. He is proud of this achievement. All children take part in daily quiet reading after school. Adults support and encourage this interest in books. As a result, some children are now able to read.

Children successfully move into and out of this home. New children feel welcomed in, and benefit from the structured daily routines which are well-established. When children are ready to move on, they receive personalised support to prepare them. This approach lessens children's anxieties and helps them to share their feelings about the move.

Children learn life skills as is appropriate for their age. They undertake basic cleaning tasks, go shopping and cook with adult supervision. Children's achievements are celebrated and captured in photos. This helps them to become more independent.

Adults provide children with a wide range of activities and experiences. This includes trips to local attractions, as well as a huge range of toys and games in the home. Children spoke enthusiastically about the holiday that they went on last year. This provided children with a real adventure, and memories which they cherish.

The home is welcoming, with bright colours on the walls and plenty of toys, books and puzzles which children can freely access. However, the kitchen and the bathrooms require some redecoration to match the quality of the rest of the home. This has already been identified by the organisation and work is planned to improve these areas. The children's bedrooms are well decorated and personalised. However, one child's bedroom is not as well presented as the others and this takes away from the otherwise homely and nurturing feel of the home.

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

Children feel safe. One child said, 'The adults listen to me, and it is the first house where I feel safe and looked after.' Adults explained to the children about the COVID-19 pandemic and what was happening across the world. Children learned how to keep safe through wearing a mask and washing their hands. Adults helped

the children to keep occupied during the national lockdowns. A child said, 'This time has been strange but fun.'

Shortfalls exist in the way that the adults and the registered manager have responded to allegations made by one child. Comments made by this child have been deemed false by the adults without investigation. As a result, these matters have not been dealt with in line with the organisation's allegations policy. Records do not capture whether the placing social worker was informed of these matters. The registered manager failed to consult with the local authority designated officer for advice on how to respond to a child who makes regular allegations. Consequently, this child is left potentially more vulnerable.

Other safeguarding matters have been dealt with in line with organisational policies, and have included examples of good partnership working with external agencies.

Children respond well to their own personalised reward charts. This encourages children to meet simple targets. Successes are celebrated. This system works effectively and is supported by the adults' consistent responses to children's behaviour. Any unkindness to others is addressed quickly and appropriately.

New adults are checked for their suitability to work with children, in line with regulatory requirements. However, some recruitment documents are not dated to show that the relevant information has been gathered prior to their employment commencing. This inconsistency across some files weakens otherwise good recruitment practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is experienced and inspirational. She role-models excellent practice for the adults who work in the home. This leads to highly personalised care for each child.

Children's progress is captured in detailed records. Memory boxes are created as soon as children move in. They hold memorabilia from day trips, as well as more everyday items, such as a pair of well-loved slippers from when a child first moved in. All these objects form a fantastic record of the child's life and experiences in the home.

Children who have just moved in learn about their new home through the words and pictures of children who have previously lived in the home or are currently living there. This creates a bright and child-friendly guide. The words of welcome and encouragement from the current children help to reassure new children who are moving in.

The registered manager provides clear leadership for her team. The adults speak positively of the team spirit and the shared focus on helping children to achieve and grow. Adults receive excellent, regular supervision. These sessions provide adults

with regular feedback on their professional practice. This helps to maintain consistently high-quality care.

Relationships between the manager, adults and professionals are exceedingly positive. One professional said:

'Members of staff genuinely love and care for the children they support. This does not feel like a residential home but a family home, and this is down to expert management and the high levels of care provided by all staff who work there.'

Children live in a home where differences are celebrated. Children are cared for as unique individuals. Adults are well trained in a wide variety of topics, including online safety, responding to child exploitation and first aid. This ensures that children are cared for by adults who have the skills to meet their needs.

The independent visitor visits on a monthly basis. However, for a year they have not suggested any recommendations or actions. This hinders the ability of the registered manager to learn from constructive feedback, in order to improve practice.

At the previous inspection, a recommendation was made in relation to the review of the quality of care. The registered manager speaks passionately about the vision she has for the home, and how she is continually reviewing practice. However, this is not reflected in the text of the quality of care report. The impact of changes she has made is not evident in the latest report/s. This recommendation is restated.

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 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 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)(c))	1 June 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare, and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)(vii))	1 May 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the review of the quality of care identifies areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery in the home, and how those actions will be implemented. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. This recommendation is restated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)
- 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. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is maintained. They must ensure that recruitment practice (and associated record-keeping) safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC063116

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: Kerri Matthews

Inspector

Anna Williams, Social Care Inspector

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