

SC063116

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home for up to six children with social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were six children living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2012.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 December 2024

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: 25 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/10/2023	Full	Good
26/09/2022	Full	Good
02/03/2022	Full	Good
26/02/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy warm, nurturing relationships with staff in the home. Conversations and play are natural, with all children having the opportunity to spend time individually or in groups with their chosen staff. Tea and biscuits on return from school is a calming space for children to share their day and plan for the evening ahead. Children usually go to the well-equipped playroom and engage in a wide range of activities with each other or staff, which they very much enjoy. Children talk positively about the staff, and observation showed genuinely caring relationships, with lots of chatter and hugs.

Children are consistently positive about the home and the experiences they have. They excitedly talk about activities they have been on. Children discussed the fun they had on the house holiday, showing the photographs on the wall and souvenirs they had bought while visiting different places. The organisation regularly distributes questionnaires for children regarding how they feel about their home and the care that they get. Children decided that they do not like the language used in these questionnaires, and have been supported by staff to raise this to senior managers within the organisation.

Children share their views regarding who they see from their family, where they would like to live in the future and anything else that they would like their independent reviewing officer to consider as part of their statutory reviews. The child's voice is clear in these, and staff support children to be heard, advocating when necessary. One-to-one sessions provide a space for children to share their feelings, wishes and views as well as looking at essential areas for their development. The children living in the home are young, so some of the sessions focus more on their reactions to the subject being discussed. Children learn to articulate how they are feeling and recognise their emotions. Individual identities are respected and considered during the sessions, at an age-appropriate level.

All children attend local schools. The staff keep in regular contact with teaching staff to ensure that children are succeeding as well as they can. Where appropriate, new schools are identified for children to develop their education skills in an environment that is best suited to their needs. Successes in school are celebrated with trophies, medals and certificates on display. Children are helped to complete homework, with staff praising their work and increasing children's confidence in their skills and abilities. When children have a particular skill or interest, they are supported to attend clubs. These include drama, football, hockey and swimming.

Clear planning for children moving in or on from the home is a particular strength of the management team. One child who moved on benefitted from the use of the analogy of a football player transfer between teams to make it positive for them, rather than it feeling like a change of placement. This kept the child central to the planning process.

Children are helped to understand their feelings, which prepares them to move on to the next step of possibly having therapy. Strong links with the organisation's therapy team and child and adolescent mental health services mean that staff have the support and guidance to help children with their emotional well-being. Children learn how to follow healthy lifestyles through role modelling by staff, including physical activity and making freshly cooked foods.

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

Staff have an excellent understanding of each child's risks and vulnerabilities. They understand the impact of children's past experiences and how these affect children's ability to build relationships and trust people. Staff understand the processes to follow should they be worried for child's safety or welfare, including how to escalate any worries outside of the organisation.

Staff support children to develop and grow emotionally as well as allowing them the opportunity to take age-appropriate risk in line with their abilities and understanding. Staff support children well through one-to-one discussions, house meetings and general conversation to learn how to keep safe in different situations. Any safeguarding concerns or allegations are thoroughly investigated with the guidance of the local authority designated officer. When areas for development are identified through this process, action plans are produced.

Staff understand that all children's behaviour is a form of communication. Children are supported to reflect on how they are feeling. Through consistency in approach, children can gradually identify their emotions. Children's plans are clear in how staff should respond when a child is anxious or upset, including the children's views on how they can best be supported. As a result, there is little use of physical intervention as relationships with the children mean that staff can help children to process distressing thoughts and situations.

The staff work well together to ensure that there is consistency and children know what is expected of them. Children do not go missing from the home. However, there are plans in place, including photographs of the children, should this happen, and staff know how to respond in these circumstances. No children currently go online independently or have mobile phones, but are being prepared for this through learning about online safety and the safe use of social media.

Children are protected from avoidable risk through regular checks of the home and environment. However, the décor in the home is tired and needs refreshing, and the bathrooms need to be refurbished.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has high aspirations for each of the children in the home. She ensures that all staff know how to support the children and that they are working consistently as a team. Staff are complimentary of the leadership that the manager provides, saying that

they work well as a team and can raise any concerns or question decisions made for a full explanation. Staff say that they can approach the manager with any ideas they have, and they will be listened to.

Staff are well supported and have the training and supervision they need to meet the needs of the children. The induction programme means that new staff learn skills from shadowing more-experienced staff in the home.

The manager has good oversight of the children's progress and experiences through spending time in the mornings and evenings with the children, asking their opinions and speaking to staff. She regularly reviews their plans, ensuring that they are up to date and reflect the progress that children are making.

The manager confidently advocates for children. They make sure that children have the services and experiences they need, and challenges partner agencies where she feels this may fall below standards. Joint working with partner agencies is strong, with a focus on the child's best possible outcomes.

The manager is constantly seeking to improve the outcomes of children and makes use of monitoring systems to identify areas of improvement. However, the report by the independent person lacks rigour, challenge and evaluation, leading to them not being as supportive as they could be for the manager and responsible individual to develop the service provided. The language in the reports is, at times, outdated and judgemental.

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 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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) In particular, to ensure that bathrooms are modernised to a suitable standard, and that the home's decor is suitably refreshed.	24 January 2025
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b) (5)) In particular, ensure that reports are factual and evaluative, explaining how the independent person has come to their conclusions, and use non-stigmatising or judgmental language.	24 January 2025

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

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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