

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 home provides care and accommodation for up to six children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Currently, all the children are boys aged between 7 and 11.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in February 2012.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 February 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2018	Full	Outstanding
30/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/05/2016	Full	Outstanding
27/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Ensure that the individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 15.5, page 65)
Specifically, ensure a more rigorous evaluation and analysis of incidents, restraints and other findings.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make excellent progress. Most have experienced significant trauma and neglect in their early years. Relationships with staff are strong, and children show signs of feeling valued, cared for and supported. Children speak highly of the team and are developing positive attachments. Given their previous experiences and progress, this is a clear sign of exceptional practice.

The home is beautifully decorated and maintained to a high standard. Children can choose the colours of the living spaces and bedrooms. This is represented in the vibrant palette of each room. It gives the home a child-friendly and welcoming feel.

Staff give the children plenty of focused time and attention. They offer playful and positive role modelling. Staff take a strong interest in what children are doing at school and celebrate children's achievements. One room is covered from floor to ceiling in certificates highlighting children's progress. Staff ask children plenty of questions about what they have learned during the day. They use this dialogue to open important discussions with children around personal safety, diversity, bullying, religion and international culture. Children engage in these conversations with confidence. Staff give much care to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to contribute.

Staff also place an importance on reading. Some children arrive with very limited reading ability. They are supported and encouraged to learn to love books. Children read alone and alongside staff, and they talk animatedly about the kind of books that they enjoy.

Children work towards agreed life goals and targets. Key workers support children to achieve these goals and they monitor children's progress through detailed monthly reviews. Children are also encouraged to pursue their chosen interests and activities in the wider community. Children attend cubs, local football teams, bellringing, gymnastics, performing arts and tennis. Staff are always on the lookout for new opportunities and new experiences for children.

Staff support children to develop greater emotional resilience and stability. This has enabled the home to manage many positive transitions back into stable foster placements. The home takes a very active role in this process. A great example of this positive practice is the use of a transition diary for children. Children reflect on and write down the things that are exciting about their move but also the things that they will miss about the home. They learn about their prospective foster families and are given time to prepare for change.

Children know how to raise complaints. Staff use house meetings to help children to work through any issues that they are finding challenging. The minutes demonstrate a strong focus on supporting children to reflect. They learn to deal with conflict and disagreement constructively.

There is strong evidence of children's participation in decision-making in the home. Records are full of the children's own handwriting. Children complete review documents themselves, prior to meetings. Children's files contain personal workbooks on issues such as positive relationships, internet safety and managing risk.

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

Staff go to great lengths to understand how a child's life experience affects their behaviour. Risk and behaviour management plans are of an exceptionally high standard. Each one begins with a summary of the child's journey through care. The registered manager monitors these regularly to ensure that plans are meeting each child's individual needs.

While children do not go missing from the home, all have their own 'missing persons' procedure. These are kept on file and can be shared with the police, if necessary.

Children can present with very complex behaviours. Staff always respond calmly and supportively. Staff seek innovative ways to manage behaviour and regularly update strategies to achieve the best possible outcomes. The registered manager was able to provide evidence of significant improvements, including a reduction in incidents and enhanced peer-to-peer relationships.

Staff strive to avoid the use of restraint, wherever possible. It is only employed where there is significant risk to the child concerned or to others. Records of restraint are very clear. Entries are detailed and there is a comprehensive chronology to show the actions taken during and after each incident. Children are encouraged to engage in a debriefing discussion after the incident. This helps them to reflect on the impact of the incident on themselves and on others. Staff manage negative behaviour in a way that is proportionate and sensitive to the complex factors that influence children's behaviour. Staff access advice from external specialists such as the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and the National Autistic Society to find the best ways to support children.

Children demonstrate a well-developed understanding of issues such as bullying, racism, religious intolerance and personal safety. When a child recently used racist language at school, staff did positive work with all the children to help them to understand why this was unacceptable.

Staff have very thorough training in safeguarding and positive behaviour management. They demonstrated a clear understanding of policies and procedures within the home. They were able to identify all the support networks outside of the home that can help to keep children safe.

The home has done plenty of work with children on internet safety. This includes a recent training activity that staff undertook with children on online grooming. The work is evidenced by a range of learning resources available in all children's files.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager shows great pride in her home and her staff. She demonstrates a deeply caring attitude towards the children in her care. She has a detailed knowledge of their histories and current needs. She clearly explained the home's ethos, including a focus on the importance of play. Staff practice reflects this ethos very strongly. She has inspired the team to think creatively and strive for excellence.

The registered manager maintains strong oversight in all aspects of service delivery. Her internal monitoring ensures best practice. She also encourages staff to reflect, wherever possible, on the quality of care provided to children.

Staff are chosen carefully to ensure that they meet the needs of the children placed at the house. Recruitment processes are robust. Staff induction and training are comprehensive. Staff confirmed that mandatory training is of a high quality. They also praised the organisation's willingness to source specific training courses, such as autism awareness and supporting children with trauma. Staff said that this has helped to equip them with the expertise that they need to deliver positive outcomes.

Staff reflected very positively on the quality of supervision that they receive. They speak affectionately and respectfully of the manager and she inspires confidence in her team. The manager is a strong advocate for the children.

Staff value the principles of equality and accepting difference. Young people have been able to explore issues, such as gender and identity, in a safe and caring environment. Children have also been helped to learn about race, religious difference and the impact of bullying and hate crime.

Children have an active voice, and its impact can be seen at all levels of the home. Staff are committed to listening to children and ensuring that it is an empowering place for them to grow up in.

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 difference 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: SC063116

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Kerri Matthews

Inspector

Peter Jackson, social care inspector

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