

SC066185

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, five children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2024.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 October 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2025	Full	Good
19/03/2024	Full	Good
04/07/2022	Full	Good
27/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out of the home and one has moved in. Both moves were well managed, providing children with support throughout the process. The child who moved out had a thoughtful plan in place and experienced meaningful goodbyes to support a positive ending. Staff provided guidance to the child's carer following the move, and the child has since returned to visit. Social workers for both children praised the staff for their efforts, with one attributing the quality of care as a main factor in the child being able to successfully manage a move to a family setting.

All children attend school regularly and are making good progress in relation to their starting points. Children's educational needs are understood by staff, and when required, education, health and care plans are in place to support their individual learning.

Children engage in a wide range of activities in the home and in the community, including trips to theme parks and bike rides with staff. Staff actively help children develop independence skills by giving them responsibilities and encouraging them to take age-appropriate roles in relation to their self-care.

Staff fully understand the importance for children of spending time with their family and actively support these arrangements. Children's family members speak positively of the efforts made by staff to promote these relationships. As a result, children enjoy quality time with their families.

The condition of the home varies throughout. While there have been some well-considered changes to the layout, such as the addition of an upstairs games room and the relocation of the office, the children's bedrooms have a common theme in terms of presentation. Some children's bedrooms look unkempt, with broken furniture, scuffed walls and a buildup of dust on surfaces.

In contrast, the downstairs areas of the home are clean and tidy and feature many homely touches, including soft furnishings and photos of the children and their artwork displayed on the walls. This is somewhat undermined by institutional elements throughout the home. For example, the home features an educational display, which has remained in place since the last inspection, along with visible written rules, health and safety signs and menus. Additionally, some items, such as children's snack boxes and toiletries, are locked away, which is not reflective of a typical home environment.

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

Children benefit from caring and trusting relationships with the staff who care for them. Children say they feel safe where they live and attribute this in part to the care they receive. All children can identify a trusted adult in the home who they can speak to about any concerns, feeling confident they would take action to address any issues for

them. One child said, 'It's good living here; staff are great. You can talk to any of them if you are worried.'

Children understand the rules and behavioural expectations in the home. Boundaries are clearly defined and applied by the staff, providing children with predictable and reliable care. Staff have a good understanding of each child's individual needs and behaviours, which enables them to identify small changes and respond proactively. This helps them to address and manage situations quickly, reducing the possibility of escalation.

An allegation made against a member of staff was addressed promptly and efficiently. Immediate safeguarding measures were put in place while the investigation was carried out, and relevant professionals were informed and kept updated. All actions arising from the investigation were addressed, including restorative work between the child and the staff member.

Children are rarely missing from the home. While staff can clearly describe the procedures to follow, the one missing-from-home incident during this inspection period was not well managed. Staff did not follow the child's individual plan, failing to report the child missing or initiate a search within the agreed time frame. Inconsistencies between the manager's account and the written record, along with a lack of management oversight, meant that staff practice was not scrutinised and shortfalls were not addressed. Furthermore, a follow-up discussion with the child did not explore the risks associated with the incident.

Staff are trained in de-escalation techniques, and, as a result, physical intervention is rarely required to manage situations. Since the last inspection, one incident has involved the use of physical intervention. Although the manager reviewed and signed off the record of this incident, the report has not been made accessible to the independent visitor, despite the incident occurring several months ago. Additionally, there is no record to evidence discussions held with the child or member of staff following the incident.

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

The registered manager demonstrates enthusiasm and commitment to his role, maintaining an effective presence in the home. Children and staff view the manager as a central figure who listens and takes appropriate action when concerns are raised.

Staff speak highly of the manager, describing him as 'knowledgeable' and 'encouraging'. They report a positive work culture and enjoy coming to work, which is reflected in the stability of the team. A newly recruited staff member described a supportive induction, which allowed them time to get to know the children and the role before taking on responsibilities.

Partnering professionals detail a helpful working relationship with staff. They praise the communication they receive, stating they are kept informed and regularly updated about children.

Although there have been some improvements in the quality of reports provided by the home's independent visitor, the actions identified from these visits are not consistently implemented. Furthermore, the manager has not made effective use of the internal quality of care review, which lacks any actions to support improvement for the home.

Internal monitoring systems have not been effective in identifying shortfalls in practice. As a result, the limited safeguarding incidents that have occurred have lacked appropriate management oversight, leading to missed opportunities for reflection and learning.

Safer recruitment procedures are in place to assess the suitability of new staff. However, a staff member was transferred between homes within the organisation while subject to an ongoing investigation. Although the manager was aware of the circumstances, no additional safeguards were implemented to protect children while the allegation was investigated.

The manager has not taken action to address previous requirements. Electronic monitoring systems, which children previously described as 'intrusive', remain unchanged. Door alarms continue to be used during the day to monitor children's whereabouts. This practice is disproportionate to the assessed risks and is not aligned with the children's plans or consent in place.

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 registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(c)(d)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	7 November 2025
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the independent visitor is able to access and review all relevant documents.	28 November 2025
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.	28 November 2025

In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (5))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all safeguarding records are subject to oversight and scrutiny, to confirm that suitable actions have been taken and to identify and address any potential shortfalls in practice.	14 November 2025
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (c)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the home is clean, well furnished, and, as far as possible, reflects the characteristics of a family home.	28 November 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: SC066185

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: Michael Atkins

Inspectors

Kerry Howarth, Social Care Inspector

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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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

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