

SC068803

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The staff at this children's home provide care for children who have mild to moderate learning difficulties and complex emotional needs. It is operated by a private organisation that also operates several other children's homes.

There are two registered managers: Natascha Field who was registered by Ofsted on 01 November 2016 and Lloyd Starley who was registered by Ofsted on 31 January 2019.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 March 2019

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: 1 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/11/2017	Full	Good
31/01/2017	Full	Good
08/11/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
17/02/2016	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 notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— - a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; - an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; - there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; - a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or - concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or - there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— - must include details of— - the matter; - the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and - any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40(4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	30/05/2019

After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25(1)(d)) In particular the registered person must ensure that: 1. All visitors know the evacuation procedures on arrival and sign the visitor's book when they leave the premises. 2. Any recommendations in fire risk assessment reports are reviewed and responded to without delay.	30/05/19
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Recommendations

- Staff should understand the system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising where children have managed situations well. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.39)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that the staff always record why they have assessed that a child has not met a daily target.
- 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. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that they continue to improve the quality of analysis and evaluation of care in the six-monthly reports, which are required to be completed under Regulation 45.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who live here make good social and academic progress. Children all scored the home seven to nine out of 10. One child said that the only reason he would give the home a higher score would be if it was in another, less rural, location.

Staff provide good care and carefully consider the individual needs of children from the time they arrive.. A social worker was impressed by the level of attention paid to a child's arrival at the home; this made a real difference to how quickly he settled.

The current group of children are well matched. The organisation has used a considered approach to re-evaluating which children should live here and the kinds of needs that staff meet well. This has led to managers accepting children more carefully against these criteria. Staff are positive about this change. They say that the home is calmer than it has been for a while and that this has helped them to support children to make greater progress.

Staff build warm, caring and positive relationships with children. All children spoke about someone who they would approach if they had a concern. In one instance, the support that staff provided to a child who began to struggle last year made a considerable difference to him. He had stopped engaging in his education and his behaviour at the home was frequently challenging. He is now back in school and is enjoying living at the home. The child told the inspector that the change had occurred because the staff had 'stood with him through this and had not got cross'.

Children's views are respected and acted on. Minutes of children's meetings clearly show how children's views are responded to. It is positive that children make comments on all plans about them and that they are encouraged to say what they think should happen. One child considers that their views are not being considered by the local authority. The staff are advocating on the child's behalf and will be offering him other children's rights services if this is unsuccessful.

Children's health needs are understood and catered for well. One child has stopped using particular medication because it was no longer needed, and another has lost weight since arriving. Children are encouraged to attend health appointments and the staff discourage children from taking up unhealthy activities such as smoking. They also support them to stop if they do smoke.

Education is promoted well, and most children attend school regularly. One young person, who has not attended school for several years, is having tutoring at home. He is making significant progress which staff continue to work with him to extend and expand so that he will be receiving 25 hours of education at a pace that suits his needs.

The activities that are available support children to improve their health and develop

positive relationships with each other. For example, a favourite pastime among the children is trampolining. Children also get involved in the interests that they like. The staff think proactively about opportunities that will assist with children's individual developmental needs.

Children are thoughtfully prepared for adulthood. Independence skills are part of every child's goals and reflect their age and developmental needs well. The staff regularly talk to children about what they already do to look after themselves and what they skills they need to develop. Life skills courses are used to support children's development before these are formerly required at age 16.

The time that children spend with their friends and family is supported effectively. One social worker was very positive about how the staff supported contact arrangements with a child and their family and the ways that staff managed this. The support and work that staff have undertaken with education providers has had a positive impact on children's well-being and is appreciated by them.

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

Safeguarding is taken seriously and has been improved. Good systems for protecting children's use of online services are used well to monitor children's safety and to support them to be safe while online. Managers make sure that the staff know about current safeguarding concerns, such as knife crime. Managers also plan with staff how these issues will be discussed with children. Social workers consider staff's safeguarding practice to be good and they are satisfied with the level of information staff share with them if concerns arise.

The organisation's response to a missed concern was reflective and rigorous. The issue of concern did not result in harm to a child. However, managers recognised the potential for this to have occurred and acted quickly to improve practice. A detailed review involving all levels of the organisation was undertaken. The review has resulted in positive changes to safeguarding practice and a renewed commitment from the staff to be inquisitive and to uphold their personal accountability for safeguarding children.

Behaviour is managed well. Children have a clear understanding of the behaviours that are expected. Rewards link well to children's overall needs. However, reasons why children do not achieve their daily rewards are not always logged. This may prevent children from understanding what they are not achieving well. It also reduces the ability of managers to review why a child is not achieving well and to consider how to help the child to achieve their goals.

Staff respond well to concerning behaviours. Since October 2018, only one child has gone missing. Staff respond quickly and work well with other agencies to ensure that children are found as soon as possible. Restraints are rare; children did not raise any concerns about this and no restraints have occurred since Oct 2018.

Any indication of children bullying others, or being bullied, is managed rapidly and effectively. This reduces the likelihood that this behaviour will reoccur. Staff successfully help children to change their perceptions and their understanding of the attitudes of others by encouraging empathy and understanding. The actions of staff have promoted good relationships between children. This has resulted in children having a more positive view of each other and it has strengthened children's tolerance of one another.

Risk assessments for children are updated with relevant information quickly. However, the information within each risk assessment is not carefully reviewed when changes are made. In one instance, information in one part of the assessment had been changed, but in another it had not been updated. This resulted in the information that staff referred to being out of date.

Fire safety requires improvement in some areas. Regular fire checks are undertaken and precautions to prevent legionella infections are implemented well. However, staff do not make sure that visitors always know the fire procedures when they arrive or ensure that visitors sign out when they leave the home. In addition, leaders and managers have not ensured that recommendations from the home's last fire risk assessment were responded to.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A stable staff team are led and managed well. A new manager has successfully joined the team to cover maternity leave. Social workers and staff were very positive about how the home has changed in the last few months. Staff particularly liked the manager's calm and inclusive approach, which had assisted the transition.

Regular and helpful supervision supports the staff well. Staff like supervision and say it assist them to reflect on their practice, and to develop their skills and knowledge. Discussions at these meetings focus on the right things, for example on children, safeguarding, a person's strengths and weaknesses and their ambitions for the future.

Training supports the staff to understand children's needs. Training is kept up to date for each member of staff and it links to issues for children, such as child sexual exploitation. Managers monitor and support the staff to retain knowledge of important aspects of their training which they infrequently have to use. For example, the manager reviews the staff's understanding of restraint every few months.

Relationships with other professionals are established and maintained effectively. Several social workers said that they are very pleased with the ways staff focus on children's needs and work with them.

New monitoring systems have increased staff's abilities to complete administration tasks on time. Paperwork is more up to date and there is more regular staff supervision. Monitoring systems did not, however, identify that one notification had not been made to Ofsted after a serious incident last summer.

The six-monthly reports have improved in quality, and the organisation is reviewing these further. This is welcomed as the reports continue to lack detailed analysis of how the home operates. This does not fully support leaders and managers to plan to improve the home's operation.

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: SC068803

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: Natascha Field and Lloyd Starley

Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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