

SC068803

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 run by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 May 2021

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: 18 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
05/03/2019	Full	Good
01/11/2017	Full	Good
31/01/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience positive relationships with staff. Children and staff were observed to be relaxed in each other's company. Children appreciate the support that they receive from staff and recognise that they have made good progress as a result of living in the home. Staff build secure and positive relationships with children by providing genuine, nurturing care.

Children make good progress in education. This is because managers and staff have ambition for them and celebrate their successes. Staff were proactive in encouraging all children to return to full-time learning once Covid-19 restrictions ended. One child is excelling in an apprenticeship work placement, but is currently unable to attend due to an injury. The registered manager has successfully advocated for the child's apprenticeship to be held open for him while he is recovering. Consequently, children's life chances are improved.

Children have a say about the day-to-day running of the home. Staff speak knowledgeably about children's individual preferences. These are incorporated into daily planning, for example menu choices. Children's wishes and feelings are included in their care and support plans. As a result, children are empowered to know that they have a say in decisions about their lives.

Staff members were unable to confidently describe how they promote culture and diversity. There are no cultural references in the way the home is presented or decorated. This is a missed opportunity to create an environment that tells children and staff that diversity is celebrated within the home.

Children participate in activities which they enjoy. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on the staff team's ability to offer a broad range of community-based activities. Staff have not made full use of the home's environment as an alternative. For example, one child is said to have an interest in nature but this has not been fully pursued, despite the opportunities presented by the home's spacious garden. Another child has not been successfully supported to follow his independence pathway plan and routinely cook his own meals. As a result, there have been missed opportunities to expand children's interests and learning.

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

Staff prioritise the safety and well-being of children. Children said that they feel safe and that they can speak to the staff if they are worried about anything. Robust recruitment practice ensures that the adults working in the home are suitable.

Incidents of children going missing are rare. On one occasion, two children went out together and misused alcohol. Their immediate response was to call staff and ask

for help to get home. The children's trusting relationships with the adults kept them safe from further harm.

Children's risks reduce over time. For example, one child arrived with a history of extreme self-harm and aggressive behaviour towards adults. He no longer requires medication. He has been helped and supported to manage his feelings and the frequency of incidents has steadily reduced. Despite good care practice in relation to safeguarding, the written risk assessments in place designed to reduce vulnerabilities are not routinely updated. As a result, they contain conflicting information and do not reliably inform staff how to keep children safe.

Some aspects of behaviour management do not provide evidence that positive behaviour is promoted. Children have daily rewards, which staff use to demonstrate progress towards behaviour-related goals. While staff show care towards the children, daily records do not consistently demonstrate a positive lived experience for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is fully involved in the children's lives. He demonstrates a sound understanding of the children's needs and has high aspirations for them.

The views of children, their parents and other people important to them have not been ascertained within internal monitoring arrangements. As a result, a less rounded view informs the development of the quality of care provided in the home.

Children enjoy a homely environment. Managers have recognised that some areas of the home and garden require some maintenance, and plans to complete the required work are in place.

Frequency of the use of physical intervention has reduced. The manager reviews each incident with the children and adults involved. However, learning is not fully recorded or consistently reflected in the summary of the incident that is shared with the child's social worker. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate independent scrutiny of safe and proportionate practice.

Staff spoke positively about the support they receive from the manager. Supervision takes place at agreed intervals. As a result of a recommendation made by the independent visitor, supervision now includes reflective discussions about safeguarding children. This provides a safe space for staff to reflect on their work and for the manager to ensure that care practice is in line with the ethos of the home.

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 enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. (Regulation 9 (1))	30 June 2021
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 home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This is with specific reference to ensuring that individual risk assessments contain the required detail to reliably inform staff how to keep children safe.	30 June 2021
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 system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (2)(a) (5))	30 June 2021

Recommendations

- Principles for behaviour management should include understanding each child's behaviour to allow their needs, aspirations, experiences, and strengths to be recognised and their quality of life to be enhanced. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.35)

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)
- All incidents of control, discipline and restraint must be subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: SC068803

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: Lloyd Starley

Inspectors

Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector
Lee Kirwin, Regional Inspection Manager

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