

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 social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered since January 2019.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2022

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: 11 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/05/2021	Full	Good
18/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
05/03/2019	Full	Good
01/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All the children are settled and making good progress. Children form trusting relationships with the staff and are confident in being able to talk to someone if they have any worries.

Children's health needs are well planned for. All children attend routine appointments and receive specialist paediatric care when required. One child who has a specific health need is treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity.

All children excel in their education. One child has made exceptional progress from their starting point, with the child's social worker attributing this to the dedicated work put in by the registered manager and the staff. Communication between the staff and the children's schools is excellent.

Staff support children to attend local clubs and to be active. For example, children enjoy going on long bike rides where they can explore the local countryside. Children are supported to build on family relationships. For example, one child recently attended a comedy night with his sister. Consequently, children develop positive memories.

Good planning ensures that children are ready for independence. For example, when a child was due to move into independent living, the registered manager produced a bespoke plan. This included helping the child to find employment and supporting them with financial planning. The child told the inspector, 'I loved it. I felt 100% supported. All the staff were kind.' This demonstrates the team effort to provide children with the best opportunities to be ready for adulthood.

Bedroom alarms are used to monitor children's movements at night. However, no assessment is carried out to determine whether these are required when risks have decreased. This practice does not reflect children's progress. Furthermore, some children's bedrooms were found untidy and contained broken furniture. This shortfall was addressed during the inspection.

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

Staff take a child-centred approach to helping children to understand danger and to stay safe. As a result, children do not go missing from home, experience bullying or self-harm.

Staff rarely use sanctions. When they are used, the registered manager reviews the sanction and ensures that it is proportionate to the behaviour of the child and that it is restorative in nature.

Managers ensure that all staff go through rigorous recruitment checks to ensure that they are safely recruited and suitable to work with children.

Risks for children are identified from the point of a child's referral to the home. Staff are able to demonstrate their knowledge of current risks for children and the plans in place to reduce risks. However, there are some shortfalls in risk management. For example, laundry pods, which should be kept out of the reach of children, have been removed from the original containers and placed in a drawer accessible to children. While this has not caused any harm to a child, the area manager took immediate action to remedy this shortfall.

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

The registered manager is proud of the children and the progress they have made. The team has faced some challenges with staff turnover. This has been managed well.

Staff are positive about their experiences of working in the home. They are provided with regular and reflective supervision, and all feel supported by the registered manager.

New staff who have joined the home speak positively about their induction. However, records show some gaps in mandatory training and refresher training for some members of staff, including the registered manager. Consequently, there are missed opportunities in helping staff to develop their skills and to promote professional development.

A young child recently moved into the home. This was a bridging placement while the registered provider was waiting for a vacancy to become available in another home. The registered manager was unable to demonstrate how the other children's views were secured and how consideration was given to having a child who was only staying for a short period. Furthermore, this child was not placed within the remit of the home's statement of purpose. Consequently, the registered provider has admitted a child outside of its statement of purpose and has failed to consider the impact on other children.

Leaders and managers do not ensure the environment is well maintained. For example, the garden has overgrown weeds and a broken fence. Children have asked for some rattan furniture outside so they can sit down. However, no progress has been made in considering this request. Furthermore, the inside of the home is not maintained to an acceptable standard. Consequently, children are not provided with a nurturing, clean environment and their views, wishes and feelings are not adequately considered about the development of the home.

The independent visitor's reports lack external feedback and contribution. One professional, who recently visited the home during the independent visitor's visit,

was surprised that they had not been asked to provide feedback. This is a missed opportunity to gather the views of important stakeholders.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(c))	31 August 2022
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; 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)(b)(d))	31 August 2022
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	31 August 2022

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)(f))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))	31 August 2022

Recommendations

- The registered provider should review the use of door alarms for each child to ensure this reflects progress made. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home’s arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home’s care. This includes obtaining the views of external stakeholders to contribute to the assessment of the home. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Lloyd Starley

Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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