

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	10/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC023736
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited
Registered person address	Ethelbert Specialist Homes, Cheesemans Farmhouse, Alland Grange Lane, Manston, Ramsgate, CT12 5BZ

Responsible individual	Leslie Davenport
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Sophie Wood

Inspection date	10/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Sustained effectiveness. At the full inspection in July 2015, a new manager was taking appropriate action to meet the requirements and recommendations set from the previous inspection. His decision to withdraw his application to become registered with Ofsted caused minimal disruption as suitable interim arrangements were swiftly implemented by the area manager. A smooth transition and handover to a newly appointed manager is on-going and she has made her application to be registered with Ofsted. The new manager, with targeted support from the area manager, demonstrates a methodical and pragmatic approach to recognising and implementing necessary improvements. Three requirements and five recommendations were made at the previous inspection. A clear and measurable plan to implement these and embed positive changes demonstrates confident leadership. Actions taken to meet requirements and recommendations with regards to the induction and supervision arrangements for all staff have a sharper focus which recognises the unique differences of individual job descriptions and roles. Consequently, a more meaningful and targeted approach to these critical areas is occurring. Senior managers are also reviewing staff performance procedures. This is strengthening the manager's ability to take swift and decisive action to tackle performance concerns. Combined with her appreciation of the home's recent chain of unsettling events, including different managers and a spate of challenging incidents from previously placed young people, the home feels calmer, with a clearer sense of direction. This is captured by a comment from a member of staff, 'I feel really positive that our new manager is very clear about how and where we need to focus for the young people.' In response to the changes, the manager is currently reviewing the statement of purpose. Her proposed timeline for the completion of this key document is proportionate and recognises the value of fully engaging the young people and staff team with its completion.	

The home's creative response to the recommendations about key working and targeted training provides improved safeguards for young people. In one example, a training session on a health topic was enhanced by involving a parent. This approach places individual young people's needs at the centre of staff's learning. Furthermore, such practice and consideration has impacted upon improved risk assessment guidance. As was recommended, these documents now provide clearer instructions for staff to follow to keep young people safe. The home's links with the organisation's separately registered school have also been creatively utilised. This has resulted in additional training to strengthen care staff's understanding of the education system and how they can best support the young people, in line with good parenting. Although in its infancy, its impact is already positive. One member of staff commented, 'it makes you realise that you need to understand the processes if you are going to act in the very best interests of young people.'

A company-wide recruitment drive is ongoing. The new manager has actively engaged with this process; shortlisting candidates whom she believes have the skills and attributes to strengthen the current skill set of the team. To further complement this practice, her immediate priority is a drive to include young people in decisions made about the daily operation of the home. Young people are actively making changes, such as the décor and use of communal rooms. They described the new manager as, 'good at asking what we think and want' and one said 'it's really good to be listened to.'

A culture of inclusion is being nurtured and this is evident when speaking with staff and young people. A collective renewed energy in recognising where improvements are required is resulting in a collaborative approach to achieve positive progress for young people.

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/07/2015	Full	Good
04/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/01/2015	Full	Adequate
13/02/2014	Interim	Good progress

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that staff know, for every child in their care, what level of decision making has been delegated to them in relation to the child's education. This is specific to the on-going training provision for care staff who act as key workers. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 27, paragraph 5.9)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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