

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023736
Inspector	Mark Blesky
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited
Registered person address	Cheesemans Farmhouse Alland Grange Lane, Manston Ramsgate Kent CT12 5BZ
Responsible individual	Leslie Peter Davenport
Registered manager	POST VACANT / Stephen Richard Payne
Date of last inspection	13/02/2014

Inspection date	20/01/2015
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
-------------------	-----------------

Young people make good progress from their starting points in many aspects of their personal, social, behavioural and educational development. This is because young people are engaged by effective and sustained relationships with staff members and one another. The manager and staff understand that relationships and the ability to work together are central to helping young people develop and sustain stability.

Staff members have high aspirations of the young people and are not distracted from this goal by young people's previous behaviours. This results in ambitious and innovative practices and developing highly individualised placement planning and care planning. Young people learn how to manage their behaviours more effectively and typically live in harmony with staff and one another.

Staff members understand the risks that are present for all young people. They also understand the more individual and diverse aspects of young people's behaviour and how this may impact on risk.

This enables staff to provide care that appropriately manages risk and promotes young people's welfare. However, while practice is effective, written risk assessments are not always clear and concise. Young people feel safe and protected and understand their rights to be kept free from exploitation and intimidation. Young

people are confident to make their feelings and wishes known and make representation or complaint.

The management of the home is consistent and staff are well supported and guided through strong leadership. Monitoring is mostly good; however in a very few examples it has failed to identify shortfalls in written records as above. Where shortfalls are found prompt action is taken to address these, improving the quality of care and outcomes for the young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home which is registered for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2014	Interim	good progress
11/09/2013	Full	good
26/03/2013	Interim	good progress
05/11/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for risk assessments for health and safety purposes and subsequent action taken. (Regulation 34(1) (18)) Schedule 6	28/02/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. (NMS 21.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in this home from their starting points and they learn to build and sustain warm and respectful relationships with staff. Young people learn how to trust and this is because staff provide them with clear, consistent levels of support and guidance. Young people benefit from clear boundaries and staff reinforce their expectations of appropriate behaviour.

As young people become more familiar with taking responsibility for their actions and self-control, their self-confidence grows and their ability to express themselves effectively develops. This allows young people to take greater control of their lives and influence their care.

Young people take a significant part in decisions that affect them and they are consulted and contribute regularly where previously they may have felt less influential. This further instils increased self-confidence and promotes self-expression. One young person commented, "I know my views are important because staff act on them and I am asked for my opinion on anything that really affects me".

Key working sessions successfully engage young people in health promotion which enables them to take greater levels of control of their health. Whilst some young people still need high levels of encouragement and support in this area, opportunities are used effectively to promote greater understanding by young people of their health needs. Young people have gained an increased awareness of how their lifestyle choices can impact negatively on their health.

Young people benefit from regular attendance at core health services which include the GP, optician and dentist.

All young people receive education and schooling through regular and consistent attendance at their chosen venue. Where young people have previously refused education, prior to placement, staff have worked hard and successfully engaged young people in understanding and pursuing learning.

Young people have learnt to understand the importance of learning and the choices and opportunities this will bring in their future. Work in this area has been successful and has had a significant impact resulting in good and exceptional attendance and achievements.

Young people have used opportunities to take part in community events and activities resulting in making new friends and further engaging in the wider community. One young person regularly attends competitive events and other young people have joined formal clubs and hobbies. This has resulted in young people making a commitment to structured and sustained memberships with their peers. Young people also benefit from contact with friends and family members, which is promoted and

supported by staff effectively.

Young people learn new skills and develop existing skills through support with their preparation for adulthood plans. Training and support allows young people to take on new challenges in a safe and supportive environment, prior to taking these responsibilities on their own. One young person commented, "staff help me think about my future and to be honest it wasn't really something I was doing, I feel more confident now and I feel I would know where to ask the help".

Quality of care

good

Young people benefit from good quality care which is provided by staff who understand young people's needs and how to meet them. Young people know that staff care about them, have an interest in them and work hard to meet their needs. Relationships are warm and respectful and young people learn how to manage relationships and understand the importance of working together.

Each young person is well supported by a highly individualised placement plan which focuses appropriately on young people's behaviour. Young people learn through discussion and negotiation the importance of behaving positively. When behaviour becomes negative staff use sanctions sparingly, but decisively, resulting in these episodes being infrequent and short lived. In this way, young people are able to learn and develop skills in resolving conflict and take responsibility for their behaviour.

Young people's placement plans are comprehensive, detailing the more diverse and unique aspects of their lives and their plans and goals for the future. This ensures that all services and support promote young people's individuality and choices. Regular review of these plans ensures plans are shaped and updated to meet emerging needs and goals.

Young people's health needs are met through well-organised health care planning ensuring that both core services and any specialist services are provided. This results in young people receiving prompt and effective care enabling them to live healthy lives. Health care is further supported by one-to-one discussions with staff who promote healthy lifestyles and support young people in making good lifestyle choices.

Young people are confident and express their wishes and feelings informally through day-to-day contact with staff, but also formally in meetings and one-to-one sessions. Staff members encourage young people to have their say which empowers young people and increases their self-confidence. Young people use these opportunities to express themselves enabling them to influence how they are cared for and in the manner in which the home is operated. The home is well maintained, decorated and furnished providing a warm and homely atmosphere with sufficient space and facilities to meet the aims of the Statement of Purpose.

All young people are provided with education and training from the moment that they are placed in the home. Staff understand the value of education and young people's placements are dependent on a commitment to education and study. When young people experience difficulties with learning, staff work with vigour to support and provide appropriate levels of education. Young people make a commitment to education, where they may have previously been difficult to engage. Each child in the home has made progress in both their studies and levels of attendance. One social worker commented that this home "provided a good supportive placement with very good college attendance".

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people know that they have the right to be kept safe and understand that their safety is paramount. Young people feel safe because they trust the staff that look after them and know that all decisions are made to protect them and safeguard their welfare. Young people understand safety because staff spend significant time talking to them and engaging them in understanding what it is to feel safe and be kept safe. Staff challenge young people's risk-taking behaviours and successfully encourage young people to make good decisions for themselves.

Risk assessments are embedded in all aspects of care practices and safety is achieved by young people becoming engaged and influential in managing risk. Young people and staff demonstrate an awareness of risk and risk management; however, in a small number of examples, some risk assessments were less clear in their written presentation.

It is acknowledged that risk assessment is a process, rather than a single document; however, a lack of clarity in some written documents weakens this process. In addition, new or temporary staff may rely more heavily on these written documents further reiterating the need for clarity and accuracy.

Staff and young people effectively use one-to-one meetings and individual key working sessions to look at broader safeguarding matters. Child exploitation, bullying and going missing behaviour, feature as key subjects in one-to-one working. This enables young people and staff to explore how these behaviours impact on risk and safety. One-to-one working is engaging and enables young people to share and express their views and feelings and explore their understanding of safety.

Sessions are also used to install feelings of self-worth and value within young people thereby enabling them to gain perspective of matters such as exploitation. One young person commented, "I helped write my risk assessment and as I'm now more sensible I'm allowed more trust".

Young people learn how their behaviour affects others and they gain an understanding into ways to express themselves. Young people have learnt more

innovative and less explosive ways to express frustration and anger and work with staff to develop strategies in coping and managing behaviour. As a result, physical intervention is infrequent because young people learn to take increasing responsibility.

Young people rarely go missing from the home and where episodes occur, these are brief in duration. Young people are appropriately supported and supervised and staff and the young people work together. Young people say that this reduces the need for them to run away or go missing. Activities and trips out with staff provide young people free space and less direct supervision enabling them opportunities to work with trust and responsibility.

When young people go missing the prompt and effective action of staff results in a swift return home. Close working with police, local authorities and established protocols ensure that young people are supported and protected through interagency co-operation.

Careful vetting and robust selection of staff ensures that young people are only looked after and cared for by those assessed and suitable. Well managed assessment of new staff and the appraisal of existing staff is regularly undertaken. This ensures that all staff members have the necessary personal attributes, skills and qualifications to look after the young people. Out-of-hours and on-call services are provided supporting staff if an immediate or more urgent need arises.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has a wealth of experience in working with young people over many years. He is suitably qualified and continues to train and advance his professional development. Staff say that he is a strong and effective leader, installing confidence and providing clear guidance. Staff are motivated and well supported additionally through formal and informal guidance and through the supervision which is in place.

There were no recommendations or requirements made at the last interim inspection in February 2014, however the home continues to improve through development planning. Since the last inspection, young people have benefited from the homes refurbishment throughout enhancing the pleasant and homely surroundings. In addition, supervision practices have been reviewed and this has resulted in a much more engaging and structured supervision process. Staff look forward to supervision sessions and say that this gives them the opportunity to look at their practice and discuss their personal and professional development. Staff are provided with action plans following supervision sessions, ensuring clear and focused goals are identified.

Supervision is targeted and individualised, providing the best opportunities for staff to enhance their existing skills and further develop their professional practice. Staff

training is effective and builds the self-confidence of staff. One staff member commented "I have gained a great deal of understanding through my training, which helps me to understand what makes young people tick". "This increased insight has allowed me to think more clearly and be more proactive rather than reactive".

Team meetings and group training further ensures that staff keep up-to-date with research and legal developments. Recent training has provided staff with increased learning and has included subjects such as child exploitation, behaviour management and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Quality assurance is overseen through regulation 33 visits by the independent visitor and also by the manager's regulation 34 monitoring practices. Quality assurance is typically thorough, objective and results in improved practice. It was however noted that in a very few examples the quality of the written risk assessments was not being maintained. Although, this had not left children unsafe, the lack of clarity should have been identified within the quality assurance practices.

Other aspects of quality assurance are robust and have resulted in refurbishment of the home, additional support for young people with their education and new strategies developed to manage behaviour. Quality assurance has also engaged and included young people, enabling them to express their views and wishes and thereby influencing the management of the home.

More experienced staff members take on additional roles such as key working and one-to-one support of young people. Young people have formed closer relationships and found good role models to model their own behaviour. As a result young people value key working and actively seek out one-to-one discussions to address any worries or concerns.

The homes records, staff guidance and documentation are well maintained, reviewed and well presented. Care planning files are clear and up-to-date and contribute to and support young people in gaining better understanding of their lives and experiences. Young people's plans make explicit how decisions have been made and young people's participation demonstrates a significant element of the decision-making process.

Regular and frequent liaison between the home, placing authorities and police ensures children's welfare is promoted by the effective and co-operative interagency working practices. All significant events relating to the protection of children in the home are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities, and prompt action is taken to address the matter.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.