

SC023736

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 by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Currently, there are three male children in the home.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 August 2017

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 **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The staff team makes the children feel contained, secure and valued.
- The children feel free to express themselves and explore their feelings.

- Leadership is fresh and insightful and firmly focused on improving the outcomes for the children.
- Plans for improving the quality of care are wisely framed and appropriately focused.
- The current staff group possesses a rich array of experience and talent in working with children.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The children are not receiving the best care that the members of staff are collectively able to offer because their efforts are being diluted by lapses in team working and joined-up thinking about the children's care and progress.
- An abundance of relevant information is not being meaningfully used in the plans to keep the children safe and help them to make progress in key areas; opportunities to reliably map the progress that the children make are also being missed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
26/07/2016	Full	Good
10/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/07/2015	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
13. —(1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (2)(b) ensures that staff work as a team where appropriate.	27/11/17
33. —(1) The registered person must— (a) ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; (b) ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation; (4) The registered person must ensure that all employees— (a) undertake appropriate continuing professional development; (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and (c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.	27/11/17

Recommendations

- The registered manager must review the content of care plans to ensure that all staff are able to understand the specific needs of young people and how these can best be met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.15).
- The registered manager must ensure that care plans for each child include the details of the day to day steps that staff need to take to manage their assessed risks. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- The registered manager must ensure that the available information and data recorded in the home is analysed in order to understand and plan how the

quality of care can be improved. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4).

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The energy and demands of the children are carefully channelled in positive directions by skilled staff. The children become more able to regulate their emotions and develop insight into the behaviours that undermine their progress and interfere with their learning.

Staff are quick to support the talents, interests and preferences of each child and use these in their day-to-day care to make children feel valued and acknowledged.

The children are healthy and energetic and meet their developmental milestones. This is a consequence of conscientious staff who ensure that routine medical checks are carried out and who promote healthy eating. The home secures specialised care, such as therapy and counselling, for the children when needs are identified and plans agreed.

The children's records show that their views, wishes and feelings are important to staff, who use a range of methods to seek these. Staff search for ways to improve how the children make use of house meetings and how to increase their participation.

A detailed daily feedback system ensures that staff are made fully aware of each child's experience of the school day; staff provide a daily report to the school about their care experience. This helps all staff to work together in facilitating the progress of children and helps all staff to understand and effectively respond to their daily needs. Progress and achievements are shared and celebrated.

Staff care about how the children can best benefit from contact with their parents. They are sensitive to the adverse effects that this can sometimes have and are proactive in helping to avoid these as well as supportive to the children when they occur.

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

During this inspection period, the staff team has succeeded in keeping the children safe from identified risks and unforeseen circumstances. Factors that have contributed to this are:

- staff's knowledge of the local community;
- the awareness and alertness of staff to risk;
- individual risk assessments that clearly identify specific risks and guide staff in managing them;

- adherence of staff to routine health and safety checks in the home.

However, risk management plans do not adequately prioritise key risks for each child and do not show how risk in these key areas can be reduced.

There have been no occasions of children going missing from the home during this inspection period. The staff protect the children from bullying in the home. The staff are sensitive to all forms of this behaviour and respond quickly to signs of bullying when they emerge.

The need for staff to apply physical restraint has reduced. Only necessary physical restraint is applied and is done so in a controlled and caring manner and only for as long as necessary. The recording of these incidents meets requirements, and the children are encouraged to consider how incidents of restraint could have been avoided.

Children are protected from specialist areas of risk by staff who are trained and knowledgeable in recognising and managing these risks. They also know how to equip the children to keep themselves safe from these risks that include those related to child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and online activity.

The practice of safer recruitment is closely followed in this home, and this helps to protect the children from unsuitable carers. Scheduled and monitored mandatory training ensures that staff members are well-versed in safeguarding procedures, including the raising and reporting of any concerns relating to the conduct of adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement

A newly appointed manager, who is well qualified and experienced in children's residential care, leads a staff group of talented and experienced individuals, whose potential to provide high-quality care to the children is not currently being realised. A unified and mutually supportive approach to the care of the children is being undermined by a lack of cohesion in the staff team as a whole.

Due to the good level of skill and experience among staff, the problems in team working have not yet had a significant negative effect on the experience and progress of the children, but they do need to be urgently addressed.

Management grip on staff support and development has been lost, and this is evident from significant lapses in staff supervision and the proper application of the home's induction, probation and appraisal procedures. This, in part, is the result of the inadequate staffing levels highlighted at the last inspection. However, staffing is now at the required level, and the new manager has realistic and relevant plans in place to ensure that the children experience a unified and consistent approach to their care. The standard that she would like to achieve in improving the children's care and outcomes is

ambitious, and she is quietly determined to achieve this.

The available data and information is not being effectively used to monitor the planned progress of the children or to reliably inform plans for improving the quality of care. There is also no evidence to show that practice is being informed and improved by the use of research and the application of new developments in residential care.

However, the well-being and progress of the children remains at the heart of the staff's thinking and planning, despite the identified shortfalls. Staff advocate strongly for the children and know when the response of external agencies is inadequate; they know how to effectively escalate their concerns when necessary.

Information about this inspection

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. The inspector considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. He watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, he talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspector 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: SC023736

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Cheesemans Farmhouse, Alland Grange Lane,
Manston, Ramsgate CT12 5BZ

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

John Pledger, social care inspector

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