

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023737
Inspector	Anna Williams
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	Gillian Hilton-Amzaleg
Date of last inspection	22/10/2014

Inspection date	24/02/2015
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Previous inspection	improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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This children's home provides young people with an outstanding quality of care and outstanding outcomes. Young people say they feel safe and are positive about living in the home. Young people learn about keeping themselves safe through an effective key working system. The young people do not engage in risk taking or offending behaviours. Relationships between young people and staff are extremely warm and nurturing. Care planning for young people is highly personalised and involves young peoples' views throughout. An independent reviewing officer commented 'the home gives [child] outstanding support to help them develop and mature as a young person'.

Documents show an excellent standard of recording which demonstrates clearly that young people are progressing exceptionally well. Young people add their own words, thoughts and feelings throughout their own records. Positive feedback has been received from family members about the impact the home has on young people's lives.

Excellent leadership and management provided by the long term Registered Manager means staff are motivated and high standards are consistently maintained. One shortfall was identified as a result of this inspection. A small number of shifts were led by new staff that had not completed their induction or probationary period.

No negative impact on young people was noted during these shifts. However, inexperienced staff were left in charge of the care of the young people on three occasions.

The Registered Manager recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the service. She has a development plan in place to further improve the home and outcomes for young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for a maximum of three young people, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2014	Interim	improved effectiveness
06/03/2014	Interim	good progress
02/10/2013	Full	good
25/03/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff at particular times (e.g. as leaders of staff shifts) have substantial relevant experience of working in the home and have successfully completed their induction and probationary periods. (NMS 17.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

All young people maintain excellent attendance at school or college. Taking into account individual young people's starting points they all make considerable progress academically. Some young people are active members of the school council and take on leadership roles within schools, for which they receive certificates of achievement. Some young people have participated in school residential trips. This offers them further opportunities to learn, develop socially and experience new adventures. Young people successfully take part in work experience opportunities. This provides them with unquestionably valuable life skills in relation to work and showing regular commitment to a job role.

Young people engage in purposeful activities within the home and local community. Individual talents and interests are nurtured and developed. Some young people attend regular lessons in singing or ice skating. Other young people become members of clubs such as Guides. All young people engage in the extensive range of activities on offer such as cinema trips, beach walks, trampolining, roller blading, swimming and meals out. This provides a stimulating range of new experiences for the young people and successfully engages them in constructive use of their leisure time.

Young people continue to make consistent progress towards personal independence targets. They assist with shopping for items for the house, cook small meals and keep their own bedrooms clean and tidy. Household chores are shared fairly between all the young people, who work together to complete them. This creates a positive community feel within the home and assists young people in their preparation for adulthood.

Young people maintain very healthy lifestyles and eat balanced diets. They engage in regular activities and sports which supports their physical health. Some young people take part in regular sporting lessons, competitive events and shows. Young people's emotional health is enhanced through regular meetings with therapists. This includes some very sensitive support through significant life events. This offers young people very personalised guidance in relation to their particular needs and backgrounds.

Young people receive exceedingly good support to keep in contact with family members and those important to them. The organisation promotes contact arrangements through providing practical support for families to visit. Family members speak extremely positively about the impact of these supportive measures in maintaining strong bonds with their children. Young people make friends in the local area through school, college or clubs. These friendships are encouraged and developed, for example through planned sleep overs. This supports young people's learning about positive relationships and their social development.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young peoples' health needs are comprehensively identified within individual health plans. Young people fully engage with all health matters, including both routine and specialist appointments. This ensures young people's unique health needs are completely met. An independent reviewing officer commented '[child] has benefited from the regular therapy, and nurturing support provided by the excellent manager and all the team'. Systems in place for the administration and recording of mediations are an example of good practice. Staff effectively involve young people in the regular planning of activities. Young people are listened to and staff skilfully organise programmes so that individual young people take part in events they request. This encouraging approach by staff motivates the young people to develop their hobbies and appropriate social networks.

Individual placement plans are extremely individualised to the young person. They provide a high level of detail in relation to young people's backgrounds, current goals and future plans. Staff knowledge of these plans is exceedingly good. Plans are updated regularly and always following an incident or significant event. Young people tell staff their likes and dislikes through 'all about me' books which they complete themselves. This fully involves the young people in the creation and review of their placement plans.

Staff work excellently well with educational establishments in order to promote academic achievement and attendance. Staff maintain good communication with teaching staff and attend meetings to discuss and support school placements. Some young people receive individual support with transport to school in order to support and encourage attendance. This persistent approach is successful and helps young people to learn and follow the routine of school days. Over time this support is sensitively withdrawn, and young people take more responsibility for their journeys to school such as catching a bus. This encourages their learning, as well as independence and personal organisational skills.

Young people benefit greatly from the structured key working system in place. Staff plan the majority of key working sessions, and ensure the focus of these meetings links to young people's placement plan and goals. This consistent approach builds constructive relationships between staff and young people. Topics discussed include education, learning about other cultures, keeping safe in the community and self-care skills. The well-organised key worker meetings means that young people receive regular and exceedingly personal support which helps them reach their targets. Additional ad hoc key worker sessions take place in response to events that occur, including praise for achievements and support following significant events or incidents. Key working documentation is extensive and describes in detail the meeting, with young people signing the majority of records. This forms an excellent record for young people to reflect on now or in the future.

Accommodation provided is of superior quality. One young person stated 'I like living here, it's really homely.' Bedrooms are well-decorated and reflect young people's individual interests and identities. The pet fish offer young people the chance to take responsibility and they take turns to feed them. The house and grounds are presented to an excellent standard. Young people help design display boards with photos, words and drawings. These are themed and have a positive focus such as cooking and healthy eating. This engages young people in learning about healthy living. Certificates on the walls openly celebrate young people's accomplishments.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Young people living in this home do not engage in risk taking behaviours. Comprehensive procedures are in place if a young person was to be reported missing and staff show good awareness of these. The last time a young person was missing from the home was in 2013. Any allegations or suspicions of harm are promptly shared with the relevant external safeguarding agencies and Ofsted. This promotes young people's safety and well-being.

Staff work exceptionally well as a team to manage behaviour within the home. Successful use of distraction and de-escalation techniques means that only two brief physical interventions have been used since the previous inspection. Use of sanctions within the home is very low, with only two being imposed since the last inspection. These measures are fair and appropriate.

All staff openly praise young people for achievements, whether large or small. This positivity is consistently reinforced by the whole staff team on a daily basis. Young people make their own personal reward diagram each month. This is both a creative and reflective process. The young people choose their targets and make a visual chart to record progress on. All young people engage well with this proactive reward strategy. Overall, the behaviour management systems within the home are highly innovative. As a result, positive changes in young peoples' behaviour are sustained.

Young people are protected by excellent recruitment checks of new staff. Prospective staff take part in a three-stage interview and selection process. Young peoples' views are sought about potential staff during the observation stage of the vetting procedure. Personnel files meticulously demonstrate how safe recruitment decisions are made. This protects young people from unsuitable staff gaining employment.

Young people live in a home which is extremely well-maintained. Health and safety routines are systematically followed to ensure the home is hazard free and safe. Fire drills take place at different times of the day to ensure young people and staff understand what to do in case of an emergency. This well-organised approach protects young people as they live in this home.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The manager was formally registered with Ofsted in May 2012. She obtained the level 5 diploma in leadership for health and social care and children and young people's services in 2014. Prior to working for this organisation, she was a foster carer for seven years and has experience of working with children with special educational needs.

The Statement of Purpose accurately describes the aims and objectives of the home and is followed in practice. External monitoring visits take place monthly, fully involve young people and are suitably challenging of care practices to promote continual improvement. Internal monitoring systems are highly effective. They ensure that young people's safety remains the top priority for staff and the excellent quality of care is consistently maintained.

The home is currently fully staffed. On three identified shifts, the staff members on duty were new staff who had not yet passed their induction and probationary periods. These shifts occurred due to staff sickness and the Registered Manager offered telephone support to these staff while they were working. However, this means the home was led on these occasions by staff that had not yet completed their basic training, did not have substantial relevant experience of working in the home and had not demonstrated their competence through completion of their probationary appraisal. These shifts were managed without negative impact on the young people, but this left less experienced staff in charge of the care of the young people.

The voice of young people is very strong within the home. Young people take turns to chair the resident's meetings which occur on a weekly basis. All the young people engage in these sessions and their views are listened to. Young people are consulted on a wide range of matters in relation to the home. For example, their choice of activities, menus and house decoration. In addition, young people were asked recently to think about what risks were near to the house and their ideas were added to the location risk assessment for the home. This demonstrates to young people that their views are important and valued by staff. There have been no complaints in relation to the children's home since the previous inspection.

Young people's progress books capture vibrantly in young people's own words what they achieve and any special occasions they want to remember. Young people may not always want to write in their progress log, so staff add mementos and reminders of areas of improvement or trips and events. This forms a unique personalised journal which shows how young people's confidence flourishes and their personalities develop while living in the home.

Staff receive excellent support from a highly committed Registered Manager.

Supervision provided is regular, child-focused and supports staff to develop as professional care workers. Young people add their own feedback to staff members' annual appraisals. This is another way that young peoples' views are heard. Staff feel exceptionally well supported by the Registered Manager and the wider organisation. Young people are cared for by staff who access an extensive range of training opportunities. The majority of the staff team have obtained the level 3 diploma in childcare. The remainder of staff are currently within their initial probationary period and have not commenced the course yet. Training courses completed by staff include safeguarding, fire safety, child sexual exploitation, and understanding and promoting resilience. This ensures staff have up-to-date and relevant skills to meet individual young people's needs.

The Registered Manager has a development plan in place. Progress towards this is very good. An aim to further improve the quality of the recording systems within the home has been met. Records accurately cross reference to one another and young people's growth and development is sensitively and professionally documented. Through working regularly hands on with the young people, the Registered Manager maintains good relationships with all the young people and role models high standards of practice to staff. This highly effective leadership creates a safe, child-focused and professional children's home.

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.