

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	07/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC023739
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited
Registered provider address	Ethelbert Specialist Homes, Cheesemans Farmhouse, Alland Grange Lane, Manston, RAMSGATE CT12 5BZ

Responsible individual	Leslie Davenport
Registered manager	Lesley Dunne
Inspector	Helen Lee

Inspection date	07/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC023739

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The children's home delivers good outcomes for young people in respect of their health, emotional well-being and educational attainment. All young people in the home have made progress since their arrival because they are looked after effectively by staff who know them. Staff listen to young people and do all they can to accommodate young people's requests.
- Young people have excellent and trusting relationships with an established staff team. Staff are affectionately called by family names and expressions of love are frequent and heartfelt. Young people are able to develop attachments. They especially enjoy their relationships with the registered manager.
- There is a clear method of care leading to a shared approach of putting young people first, which successfully enhances the experiences of young people.
- Young people are able to see their relatives, friends and other people who are important to them, including (if practical) sometimes staying overnight at their homes. They are able to stay overnight regularly. Staff support young people emotionally when they have a negative experience of contact.
- Placement and risk-reduction planning has improved. Risk assessments identify known risks and guide staff in applying the control measures to reduce risk.
- Leadership and external monitoring of the organisation is strong and effective. The registered manager leads by example, always placing the welfare of young people at the very centre of her thinking and practice. She has driven improvement.
- One young person stated, 'This home is the best thing that's ever happened. I love the support and love from everyone.' A social worker stated, 'Lots of credit (for a remarkable transformation) goes to the young person and the manager. The manager is exemplary, and this is rare. She can be relied upon no matter what!' One member of staff said, 'I love it here. I've been able to develop and share my knowledge and skills with the girls.'

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

Recommendations

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

- Keep under review a statement of purpose (Regulation 16 and Schedule 1). The home's statement of purpose should be child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the quality standards for the children in their care. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 14, paragraph 3.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and / or behavioural needs. The home is managed and run by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/06/2015	Full	Inadequate
19/03/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
13/01/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people have exceptionally warm and positive relationships with the staff team. Observations also demonstrated that young people build strong relationships with staff members. Young people are relaxed and at ease in their home. They speak positively about the home saying, 'The staff support all and every wish and feelings that I have' and 'Incredible.' A social worker commented that young people are 'provided with a high level of physical and emotional care.' Staff invest time with young people. They ensure that young people are available to spend one-to-one time with them and actively support young people to develop their interests, such as ice-skating, trampolining, beauty, animal-care and horse-riding. Young people are actively involved in planning activities. As a result, they engage well and this builds their confidence up. Young people try new clubs and go to local community events; these have included fun runs which raise money for charity, from which they develop a sense of achievement. All young people have good attendance at and engagement with their individual full-time education programmes. This is excellent progress. Young people have successfully attended interviews for college and work placements. Young people continue to acquire age-appropriate life skills. Staff members undertake regular, focused key-working sessions with young people to help them to learn how to keep safe. They discuss topics such as stranger danger and road safety. Young people know what to do if they are worried. They readily identify staff to talk to if they are upset or unsure about anything. Young people and staff learn together about different cultures through the internet, cultural nights and positive discussions. Young people benefit from a good approach to their health. Staff encourage them to attend routine health appointments. For those needing additional services, such as therapy, staff provide close support and preparation. Young people fully engage with the in-house therapeutic provision as well as services such as equine therapy and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. Staff work closely with health services to improve young people's health and well-being. Young people enjoy their relationships with people who are important to them, such as their relatives and friends. Staff ensure that they have contact, such as overnight stays. Young people are able to talk to staff about their difficult and painful feelings when they have a negative experience, for example after a phone call, tragic news or a breakdown in communication. Staff treat young people with dignity and respect. They are sensitive to young	

people as they go through puberty and explore their sexuality. Staff are able to have delicate conversations with young people without embarrassing them. Young people are able to celebrate their development in a safe environment.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Young people are fully and creatively supported to take measured and appropriate risks. All young people express feeling safe in the home as well as when they go out. This is an important element of why they like living in the home. The safety and well-being of young people is given the highest possible consideration. Staff take any relevant and necessary action to keep young people as safe as possible. Of particular note is the approach to young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation or forming damaging relationships. Staff have been successful at disrupting and containing some young people's inappropriate relationships with other, influential, young people. A placing social worker said, 'Seldom have I had an experience of this (the sense of transformation) for the young person.' An independent reviewing officer commented that, 'Things are going so well it is untrue.' The quality of relationships between staff and young people is an immense strength of this home. A staff member stated, 'I am happy as I know the girls are safe and everyone knows what to do if any incident occurred.' The manager has responded well to previous requirements and concerns about risk assessments. These now clearly contain all the known risks, including historical concerns, and the risk reduction measures. Regular review and updating of these documents ensures that staff have relevant up-to-date information. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of these and adopt them in their day-to-day practice. Staff understand safeguarding risks and manage these effectively. This has enabled young people to participate fully in positive activities around the community safely. The manager has arranged for further bespoke training in areas such as Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) and self-harming. The manager herself is an ambassador for CEOP and delivers training for the organisation across its residential provision. This training has ensured that staff are fully equipped to understand social media and e-safety, and that young people are not exploited through these routes. Staff seek to understand the triggers for behaviour, such as self-injurious behaviour. They do not overreact to the immediate situation; they explore the underlying emotional state of the young person. Staff demonstrate a keen understanding of what is currently going on in the life of each young person and take appropriate action.	

One young person has had a successful admission to the home along with her hamster. There has been careful placement planning with all necessary documentation in place. Effective and robust placement planning meetings and records ensured that all the information was known and evaluated by all staff. Staff anticipated the 'honeymoon period' and quickly learned how to respond effectively to violent outbursts when this period was over.

Staff are aware of the group dynamics and are skilled in de-escalation techniques. On rare occasions, staff use physical intervention. This is proportionate, well recorded and reviewed. Young people's comments and views are well represented. This has led to an increase in restorative measures and has avoided police involvement. Young people learn acceptable behaviour and are mature in acknowledging their wrongdoing and restoring relationships, for example after an incident of verbal altercation.

The manager ensures that safeguarding procedures are in place and that staff are well versed in them. This includes scenarios being discussed not just between the staff but also with and by young people, staff team meeting discussions, dedicated folders with information and reflection at supervision. She takes effective action in the event of any concern. This includes consulting with the designated officer for safeguarding in the local authority in the event of an allegation.

Young people live in a safe environment. All necessary health and safety certification is in place. The recruitment process is robust, gaps in employment are checked and references sought and verified by a phone call which is clearly recorded.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager is undertaking a level 5 qualification in leadership and management. She has been in her current post for a year following on from the home having had significant challenges. The manager is experienced and showing exceptional leadership. Her management style puts young people's interests at its heart and she is developing the staff team. Staff are extremely committed and creative. One staff member said, 'We are now a solid team that is willing to go above and beyond.' Leadership and external monitoring of the organisation is extremely strong and effective. The registered manager leads by example, always placing the welfare of young people at the very centre of her thinking and practice. She has driven	

improvement consistently with integrity and determination. Young people's needs are right at the forefront of the day-to-day practices. This ethos is central to the statement of purpose and can be seen in the quality of the care. The manager and senior staff are hands on and unite the whole staff team behind their drive for aspirational practice.

Although the home provides a successful bespoke model of care that is consistently applied in practice, this is not adequately described in the statement of purpose.

Specific job descriptions and clear selection and interview criteria have been skilfully implemented to ensure that those appointed and retained past induction have the desired qualifications, skills and experience to meet the needs of young people. All staff receive regular supervision. The supportive and learning elements of these meetings and forums are commended by staff. They confirmed that this is effective and helpful to their professional development. They feel valued and well supported. Staff supervision has a strong reflective element and the manager encourages her staff to think for themselves, to reflect on learning as well as training and to voice their opinions.

Staff receive specific training to meet young people's individual needs. The manager of the home is always reviewing this. The particular needs of individual young people are addressed effectively because staff feel equipped to deal with these needs and display enthusiasm for learning and development. During the inspection one member of staff was observed feeding back enthusiastically what she had learned at a training event earlier that week. Staff comment that, 'Training is good quality and related to the girls within our home,' and 'I love training and refreshing my thinking. It's those 'penny-drop' moments where it all comes together.'

A particular strength is the partnership working. Staff work with key professionals in their own local authority as well as other placing authorities. They agree on strategies to keep young people safe. The manager ensures that staff follow such strategies and keep good records of the actions that they have taken. Young people benefit significantly from the positive and professional relationships that the home maintains with external agencies. The high standards of care set by the home encourage external agencies to be responsive, reliable and flexible. One social worker stated, 'The manager is the expert on my young person placed with her. She has an outstanding relationship with her. I am grateful my young person has had this experience of care.' Good relationships between the home and other agencies have helped to improve outcomes for young people. The manager challenges the practice of other professionals when necessary.

Comprehensive, individualised and regularly reviewed care plans are in place. Staff have up-to-date information allowing them to meet the children and young people's individual needs. Staff handovers demonstrate highly effective use of care plan information by staff in planning activities targeted to young people's individual

goals. The manager ensures that all the plans reflect the pertinent needs of young people. Staff keep detailed records that reflect the everyday life of young people and their progress. A professional said that the home 'is extremely professional and supporting of the young person placed by our service. We have daily written communication... which has proved to be invaluable. The level of communication is excellent, as is the care given to the young person.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 that 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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