

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	12/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC023741
Type of inspection	Full
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	Kevin Flynn
Inspector	Anna Williams

Inspection date	12/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC023741

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- The home is not operated in line with its statement of purpose. In particular, staffing levels are not always as described, the premises are not of a good standard throughout and behaviour management strategies are not applied consistently.
- There are several weaknesses in the management of behaviour. The organisation's behaviour management policy is not followed consistently in practice. Current debrief arrangements for children following a restraint mean that the staff involved in the event speak with children.. Although some children have advocates, these are not used to support children to reflect on serious restraints with an independent adult.
- Risk assessment processes are weak. Staff do not record their consideration of risks involved in more complex activities such as day trips to London. Risk assessments are not routinely reviewed following significant incidents such as restraints.
- Staffing is not provided for children in line with the statement of purpose. For example, there are occasions when one staff member is sleeping in, when there should be two due to the risks. This change in staffing level is not formally assessed to consider any associated risks.
- The presentation of the home overall is not good. Areas within the home, including a child's bedroom require redecoration and remedial work to repair small scale damage.

The children's home strengths

- Children attend school every day and are making significant academic progress, taking into account their educational starting points.
- Contact with family and those important to children is promoted. Children successfully maintain attachments and build relationships with significant adults and siblings, leading to increased time together.
- Staff members work hard to provide children with a wide range of purposeful activities and experiences, which children engage in and enjoy.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard: In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard, the registered person must ensure that each child: (2)(b) (iii) is given appropriate advocacy support.	05/10/2015
12: The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that that staff: (2) (a) (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.	05/10/2015
The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. With specific reference to staffing levels, and the upkeep and maintenance of the home. (Regulation 16(5))	05/10/2015
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— (a) how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and (b) the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. (Regulation 35(1))	05/10/2015
The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation (3)(b)(i)(ii))	05/10/2015

The registered person must within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(c))	05/10/2015
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and (b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. With particular reference to evaluating restraint records, staffing levels and monitoring the standard of the premises. (Regulation 44(4))	05/10/2015

Recommendations

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

Create a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16. The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.8)

Prepare contingency plans in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels. If it is likely that there might only be one member of staff on duty at any time the manager should make a formal assessment of the implications for children's care, including any likely risks. This assessment should be recorded and available for inspection by Ofsted and placing authorities. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.18)

Ensure any staff member in a deputy or supervisory role such as 'shift leader' has substantial relevant experience of working in a children's home and have successfully completed their induction for the home in which they are employed. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.21)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for a maximum of three children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2015	CH - Full	Good
25/09/2014	CH - Interim	Declined in effectiveness
19/02/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory progress
12/11/2013	CH - Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The overall experiences of children are affected by shortfalls found which relate to the management of behaviour, risk management and inadequacy of staffing arrangement. Positive feedback has been received from placing authorities and family members about the impact the home has had on lives of children. One parent said 'my child has got confidence now. Before my child was very angry all the time. It's like a family home there. I feel very welcome when I go there. Staff are all great.' A placing social worker reflected 'I feel over the time [child] has been at the home he has found a sense of belonging there.' There have been no complaints since the previous inspection. Children share their views regularly through residents' meetings where they discuss topics such as menus or activities. One social worker commented '[child] has really made progress in verbalising his wishes and feelings. Before living at the home, [child] was quite frozen.' Not all children in the home have access to an advocate to support them to share their views and feelings about their time living in the home, such as after restraints or serious incidents. This does not positively support children with sharing their views and feelings with adults independent of the home, if they wish to. Children maintain good attendance at school. Staff successfully engages children in their homework, which in turn helps them achieve their personal learning goals. Effective working relationships between educational settings and the home ensure a child's academic achievement is actively promoted and children progress. One parent said 'my child had been out of school for a long time before they went to this home. Now they are at school full time, I'm really pleased with that.' Staff know the children extremely well. Observations show warm and appropriate interactions between staff and children. Through these positive relationships, staff members encourage children to attend routine health appointments. Through sensitive and ongoing staff support, one child has successfully engaged with a complex course of dental treatment. Children learn the importance of personal hygiene routines through key working sessions and target setting. This reinforces	

to children the importance of maintaining a healthy body.

Through the support of staff members children maintain contact with family and friends. Children who live some distance from family and significant people in their lives are not disadvantaged. Staff members facilitate complex contact arrangements so attachments are maintained.

Children take part in a wide range of purposeful activities. Some children are members of local sports clubs where they learn about teamwork, make friends and keep fit. Staff members plan holiday activities with all the children, ensuring everyone has opportunity to make suggestions and give ideas. Children positively engaged with their local community through using nearby leisure facilities such as the swimming pool and cinema. Children participate in interesting and varied trips such as go-karting or pottery painting, providing children with diverse experiences.

Children learn age-appropriate life skills. Records show that they all help participate in the running of the home, assist with mealtimes and undertake simple cleaning tasks. Older children learn about budgeting and banking. Staff record progress children make towards independence. Some children write themselves what they have achieved in their personal pathway file.

At the previous inspection, a recommendation was set to improve the décor in the downstairs areas and the children's bathroom. This has not been achieved. These areas remain in need of redecoration. The children's bathroom has an unpleasant damp smell. In addition, one child's bedroom is in need of repainting. This has been planned for some months. This work has not taken place despite the child raising this within a resident's meeting. This means this child does not have the same standard of bedroom as other children.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Weaknesses exist in the oversight of behaviour management within the home. Since the previous inspection there have been 17 incidents involving restraint. On two occasions, unplanned floor holds were used with one child. The inspector was unable to evaluate whether a review of the behaviour management strategies took place following this, as previous behaviour plans are shredded. Children are routinely debriefed by the member of staff who was directly involved in the event. This does not allow the child to speak freely to an independent adult	

who was not part of the incident, such as an advocate While the Registered Manager debriefs staff following the use of restraint; this is not the same for the Registered Manager when they are involved in the restraint of children. This is not in line with regulations and does not afford the Registered Manager opportunity to reflect on the event to improve his practice in this area.

Both the internal monitoring and the external independent visitor failed to identify that two incidents of restraint were imposed for the purposes of compliance. Behaviour management practice within the home is not consistent with the organisation's behaviour management policy. For example, the policy states all restraint incidents will be sent to placing social workers but this is not consistently achieved. In addition, one member of staff restrained a child without formal restraint training. As a result, children do not receive consistent and clear management of their behaviour.

Risk management processes within the home require improvement. The Registered Manager does not routinely review a child's physical aggression risk assessment following any incident to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Children take part in days out, such as to theme parks or to visit places of interest. Staff do not consider the higher level risks involved in such trips. For example, a staff member lone working with two children in London. There is no recorded risk assessment to inform and guide staff leading such events. This does not demonstrate a sound understanding of risk to ensure the safety of children and others.

There have been no allegations made against staff and no referrals made to the local authority since the previous inspection. Use of sanctions within the home is low. Children engage well with reward charts which outline individual targets for each month, such as brushing teeth twice a day. Regular health and safety checks ensure all living in the home are safe. Arrangements for the recruitment of new staff are sound. Following an initial interview, prospective staff members undertake a supervised visit to a children's home. Children's views and observations of new staff appropriately form part of the vetting process.

There have been three missing episodes since the previous inspection. Two episodes raised concerns about the safety and well-being of one child. Staff ensured the placing social worker for this child was kept up to date. Key working sessions with a focus on keeping safe and possible exploitation in the local community supported the child to cease this behaviour quickly. Detailed records show that staff actively search for children and welcome them back into the home. Staff have sound knowledge of the vulnerability of children when missing and child sexual exploitation.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The Registered Manager has been in post at this home since 2009. He holds suitable childcare and management qualifications. He continues to develop professionally through attending courses such as internal management skills workshops and 'Let's talk about sex' training. The home is not being run consistently in line with its statement of purpose. In particular, the home does not always have two members of staff sleeping in overnight; the quality of the internal décor is not of a good standard throughout. Staff members do not always follow the behaviour management strategies. This means children are not receiving consistent care in line with the expectations set out within this key document. Shifts are regularly led by staff members who have not successfully completed their probationary appraisal, or by staff who have not completed their induction for the home they are working in. This practice means that staff with limited professional caring experience or who are unfamiliar with the home and children are in charge as shift leaders with regularity. In addition, relief staff members who may not know the children are left on their own; this includes some sleep in shifts. The inspector identified 12 nights where the home was staffed by one staff member on sleep in duty which is not in line with the statement of purpose This has not been formally assessed to consider the risks such as managing alone in the event of an emergency or if a child was injured and had to attend hospital. Overall, the Registered Manager does not have a formal workforce plan which details the staff structure and evaluates the skills of his team in order to deliver the care as outlined within the statement of purpose. An independent person visits the home on a monthly basis to monitor the quality of care, look at safeguarding arrangements and speak to children. Their reports, although listing previous recommendations, do not evaluate any progress made to meet them. This external monitoring system has not been effective at raising standards in the home, in particular with regard to behaviour management. The	

internal monitoring system is also ineffective.

Regular contracted staff received basic induction training on appointment. This provides them with an introduction to the organisation and the home. Ongoing refreshers of mandatory training such as safeguarding and first aid take place. This keeps staff informed of changes in practice and skills to meet the needs of the children placed.

A previous recommendation to ensure all staff are trained to at least Diploma level 3 has been addressed. Currently, three out of the staff team of five hold a relevant qualification. The remainder of the team are registered and undertaking the course.

In discussion with the inspector, the Registered Manager was able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the home. However, these are not reflected within the internal development plan which primarily focuses on staff matters.

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 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 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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