

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	21 June 2016
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	Post vacant
Inspector	John Pledger

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
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	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC063116

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Management and staff have taken decisive and effective action to address weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements identified by the previous inspection. Policies, risk assessments and care plans relating to safe internet use are being applied effectively. Children and young people's safety has improved.
- The young person, around whom the concerns from the previous inspection focused, was supported to move on positively. This followed a 5-week period of significantly improved engagement.
- The manager exercises effective oversight in safeguarding children and young people - improving their outcomes. He monitors practice effectively to improve the quality of care of children and young people.
- The experience of children and young people in the home is positive, and there is a uniform approach by staff to all children and young people. Staff work together to engage children and young people in the important areas of their lives.
- Staff work hard to support children and young people to access their education successfully and to make meaningful academic progress.
- Children and young people are actively supported to live healthy lives with good nutrition. Staff strongly support children and young people in attending routine health appointments.
- Staff work enthusiastically to ensure that all children and young people participate in recreational and learning activities outside the home. This provides them with a wide range of developmental experiences and opportunities.
- The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are regarded as important, and are effectively and routinely ascertained and appropriately considered. This makes the children and young people feel valued.
- The relationships between children and young people and staff are positive and mutually respectful. Staff display genuine warmth and care for children and young people, and are strongly committed to their best possible outcomes.
- Management and staff are dedicated to positive and effectively managed transitions for children and young people leaving their care.
- A very good working relationship with external agencies, as well as with parents and carers, results in good planning, coordination of care and

effective access to services for children and young people.

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

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Recommendations

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

- Review policies and practices to ensure the best possible admission and reception of children to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- Review the effectiveness of the home's children's guide. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraphs 4.21 and 4.22)
- With particular regard to planned transitions, the registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for a maximum of three children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27 April 2016	Full	Inadequate
25 November 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12 August 2015	Full	Requires progress
26 February 2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Following the successful transition of one young person to move on, the ages of those currently living in the home at the time of this inspection mean they are referred to as 'children' throughout this report. Children display a clear sense of belonging in a home where they experience a sense of family. Staff are interested in what children have to say and are attentive to their needs. Children feel safe and secure. Children's progress and achievements are affirmed, and the relationships between children and staff are warm and stable. This provides children with a sense of security that gives them the freedom to express their feelings and to explore their potential. Staff are proud of children's achievements and progress. A local authority social worker said, 'I can't believe how much progress he has made here. You would not recognise the child that came here.' Children live in a home where the décor and maintenance is of a good standard and, in some areas, outstanding. Furnishings and equipment are of a good quality and geared to the needs of children. The display of photographs, certificates, charts and artwork in bedrooms and common areas reflects an emphasis on individualisation, personal connections and celebration of achievement. All these factors contribute to the children's sense of permanence, worth and belonging. Children play an active role in the running of the home and the choice of activities. Staff encourage children to seek new skills and experiences in an affirming and supportive manner. Street dancing is an activity currently being promoted. Interests like this contribute to the self-confidence and self-esteem of children. Staff listen to children and consider their wishes and feelings. They consult with children and value their opinions. For example, children are contributing to the revision of the home's children's and young person's guide, and some routines, such as the frequency of menu discussions, have been appropriately changed at the request of children. Staff promote a positive culture around education and learning. They are focused on all aspects of children's learning, understand the education system and attend school activities. This helps them to maximise children's learning opportunities and helps children to make good academic progress. One child who initially struggled to engage in special education is now considered ready for a mainstream provision. Children are healthy and are actively encouraged to understand and practise good nutrition. Children are cultivating a range of fruit and vegetables to promote an	

interest in healthy eating. The importance of routine healthcare is emphasised, and specialised care, such as individual therapy, is secured for those with more complex emotional needs.

The home actively supports and effectively facilitates children's and young people's contact with their families, and staff are proactive in dealing with any challenges that may arise as a result of this.

Transitions are managed effectively, in tandem with other agencies and carers. They are carefully planned and monitored, information about progress is shared and adjustments to planning are made when necessary. There is a clear and careful focus on making this an affirming and positive experience for children and young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The manager, senior managers and staff have taken urgent and comprehensive action to address the significant safeguarding concerns identified at the last inspection. This includes: ■ Immediate review of one young person's 24-hour care plan ■ A more direct approach to his engagement and behaviour management ■ Specialist training and clinical support for the staff group ■ An increase in staffing capacity ■ Specialist consultation, as well as broader organisational change, to reduce the likelihood of similar shortfalls arising in the future. This action resulted in an immediate and significant reduction of safeguarding concerns in relation to one young person, his re-engagement with services and his participation in activities inside and outside of the home. He has successfully moved on. Staff confidence has increased and practice has become more effective in addressing the issues relating to his protection, safety and care. A staff member commented, 'We had clear guidelines and were more confident. I think that it has given us a lot of motivation.' Staff are well equipped and well supported to identify, understand and address specialised safeguarding areas, such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and use of internet-enabled devices. The manager and staff have a sharpened and clearer approach to e-safety, and the controls in place for this are proportionate and effective. This helps staff to keep children safe.	

Children are protected and kept safe inside and outside of the home through effective supervision and vigilant care, as well as by the application of good-quality risk assessments. Children report feeling safe and trusting staff. One child said, 'This is our home and they look after us very well here.'

No children or young people have gone missing from the home since the last inspection. Physical restraint in the home is only applied as a last resort, when all reasonable de-escalation efforts have been exhausted. Proper post-restraint procedures are followed, to enable children and staff to recover and learn from incidents and to reduce the likelihood of these being repeated. Sanctions are fair and reasonable. They are understood and accepted by children and young people who are learning from their mistakes.

The home maintains very positive links with external agencies, including those involved in protection and enforcement. The Kent Channel/Prevent co-ordinator spoke very positively about the relationship between their service and the home, described the manager as 'thorough in his updates' and was impressed by his 'overriding interest in one young person's safety and future options in life'. Information relating to the safety and protection of children is shared readily with relevant external agencies. These activities contribute significantly to the wider practice of keeping children safe from harm.

The home adheres to the applicable health and safety regulations and provides a safe physical environment for children. Staff display good awareness of potential health and safety hazards in the home. They also understand potential sources of harm in the wider community in which the home is situated and take appropriate steps to protect children outside the home by planning activities and setting appropriate levels of supervision and vigilance.

Recruitment practice is safe and sound, and recent recruitment has secured a high-quality candidate. There is no use of agency staff, staff capacity is appropriately matched to the current level of need and there is good continuity of care for children.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The unified and motivated staff group is led by a strongly committed and aspirational manager who has submitted an application to be registered with Ofsted. At the core of practice are the well-being, safety and progress of all children. Staff are ambitious about the progress and achievements of children and	

expansive and creative in facilitating their positive leisure activities.

The manager has responded positively and constructively to the outcome of the previous inspection. Monitoring practice has been improved, and good use is being made of data and other information to inform a programme of continuous improvement in the quality of care provided.

Staff are confident in their care of children and value training. All staff are at the required level of qualification or currently working towards this. The manager is currently completing the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare.

Staff have confidence in the manager and regard him as an example of positivity and aspiration for improvement. One staff member said, 'We have gelled as a team. He [the manager] is always upbeat. He shows a real interest in the boys and staff.'

The manager has led a strong response to the previous inspection and all the identified concerns have been addressed effectively through a range of actions. These must now become properly embedded in the daily practice of the staff group. Of particular importance, the manager understands the need for effective monitoring of the quality of care and how this is affecting the progress and experience of each child.

All stakeholders are reliably informed about the home's aims and objectives because the statement of purpose reflects a clear ethos and objectives for the care of children. The statement of purpose is being applied in the home. A review currently underway is aimed at improving clarity and increasing staff understanding and engagement with the stated purpose of the home.

Staff team meetings are regular, focused and well recorded. Staff value their regular supervision, and the opportunity to reflect routinely on their practice helps to sustain their focus and motivation.

The manager and staff are able to challenge partners and services and to escalate concerns in an appropriate and professional manner when shortcomings affect the well-being and progress of children and young people. One example includes chasing the consent from a local authority to make necessary referrals to external services to secure additional support for a young person.

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a plan of development for staff and practice to meet the range of needs being presented by children and young people. However, there are planned transitions taking place soon, and the range of needs is likely to change significantly. Recent training and changes to practice are not yet embedded, and the skill set of staff will need to be reviewed.

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 children looked after 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 that 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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