

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023741
Inspector	Anna Williams
Type of inspection	Interim
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	Kevin Patrick Flynn
Date of last inspection	19/02/2014

Inspection date	25/09/2014
Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection

This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **declined in effectiveness**.

Four children and young people have come to live in the home since the last inspection. Two of these children remain living in the home. Case files demonstrate that the main source of written information on potential new admissions is the local authority referral form. Senior staff confirm that some pre-placement visits also take place to meet children and young people and this informs the assessment of whether the home is able to meet the child or young person's needs. However, the senior management team do not undertake a written compatibility assessment prior to the admission of a child or young person. Senior staff confirm that assessments of individual needs are informal and completed verbally with potential placing social workers. This does not evidence how safe admission decisions are made, taking into account the unique needs of children who could be placed and children already living in the home. For example, there is evidence that some new children and young people have been targeted by other children placed when this is a known behaviour as identified in referral information.

Two of the four children and young people placed have been two years younger than the age range stipulated within the home's Statement of Purpose. As a result, the home is not being run in line with its stated aims and objectives and the Statement of Purpose does not describe how the needs of a younger group of children will be met.

Children and young people who are placed in the home at shorter notice only have minimal information about individual personal care needs prior to initial planning meetings. Staff spoken to during the inspection were unaware of the contents of children's files who had been recently placed. Consequently, they were unaware of information that had been shared by the placing authority such as identified successful behaviour management techniques. This poor care planning practice

means children and young people are being directly cared for by staff who are not fully aware of their individual needs.

Other information shared during children and young people's initial placement planning meetings has not been transferred into children's individual risk assessments and 24-hour behaviour management plans. This includes safe caring advice for staff around one-to-one working with children and young people. This places staff at risk as a result of following care plans which do not include known safe working techniques for individual children and young people.

There have been three complaints made by children and young people since the last inspection. These have been discussed with the placing social workers, investigated and outcomes recorded. Two of these complaints link to staff professional practice. Supervision records of staff involved in these two incidents do not demonstrate that these significant complaints have been formally discussed and reflected upon with staff involved. As a result, staff are not being adequately supported to reflect and improve their professional practice as part of formal performance management. This does not demonstrate that the Registered Manager is setting good standards of professional practice within the home to benefit all children and young people placed.

Some staff members use their own mobile phones to capture photos of young people during activities. It is not appropriate for staff to take photos of young people on their personal mobile phones. This is not a secure method of storing photos of children and young people's time living in the home. Furthermore, it is in breach of the organisation's own 'internet usage and digital photo' policy. The organisation took immediate action to address this issue.

At the last inspection, a recommendation was made in relation to assessing individual independence goals and evidencing work completed towards these goals. This recommendation has been met. Pathway plan files now clearly evidence how young people work together with key workers to plan personal goals. Young people write their own progress toward their targets. This provides clear individualised support for young people as they move towards adulthood.

A previous requirement to reflect how feedback from young people, placing social workers and family members has linked to improvements within the home has been met. Internal monitoring reports now contain reference to feedback received. An example of this is a young person's request for a new house computer, which was actioned in April 2014.

Progress towards addressing the home's development plan is slow. The Registered Manager reviewed the progress of this plan in July 2014. In his review, he reflects that the home has had several months of difficult behaviours from some of the young people. He identifies that this may have had an impact on team work and staff morale. However, he does not identify specific actions to address this

observation. One improvement plan target is to develop the young people's placement plans, but this has no progress recorded.

Some young people in the home are positive about living there and others have mixed views. Some young people said they felt safe living in the home and named staff they would talk to if worried. Ofsted has received positive feedback from a placing authority about the home. This professional stated they would recommend the home to other independent reviewing officers or social workers. This professional strongly felt that young people's social and emotional development is improved by the care they receive at the home.

Missing from care episodes have reduced over recent months. There were three episodes of young people missing in February and March 2014, two episodes in June 2014, and one in July 2014. The organisation met with the local missing person's liaison officers in March 2014. This demonstrates a commitment to work together with local police to safeguard young people.

Young people live in a well-maintained and homely environment. The home offers a variety of indoor activities which young people enjoy, such as computer games and arts and crafts. Young people engage in activities within the local area such as football club, walks on the nearby beach and accessing local shops. This promotes positive community involvement and purposeful use of young people's leisure time.

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 children, who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children living in the home are able to access education through separately registered provision which is managed by the same organisation. Therapy or counselling is also available to children if this is appropriate.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
12/11/2013	Full	outstanding
08/02/2013	Interim	good progress
18/09/2012	Full	outstanding

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose (Regulation 4 (6))	31/10/2014
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	31/10/2014
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there; in particular ensure that all staff are aware of referral information and that	31/10/2014

	referral and placement planning information is transferred to the home's care planning documents (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	
27 (2001)	ensure staff receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	31/10/2014
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child accommodated in the home a record in a permanent form which shall be kept securely in the children's home so long as the child to whom it relates is accommodated there, in particular the storing of photographs relating to children accommodated in the children's home. (Regulation 28 (3) (a))	31/10/2014

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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.