

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	17/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC023743
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited
Registered provider address	Cheesemans Farmhouse, Alland Grange Lane, Manston, Ramsgate CT12 5BZ

Responsible individual	Leslie Davenport
Registered manager	Ashley Smith
Inspector	Helen Lee

Inspection date	17/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in 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	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC023743

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children are settled and happy, and enjoy stable placements. They feel safe and confirm that they feel that the staff care about them.
- Children are able to develop attachments. They especially enjoy their relationship with their key worker. Staff listen to the children and do all that they can to accommodate their requests. Mutual respect underpins the positive relationships between the staff and the children.
- The children make progress at this home. They are engaged in education and receive the health services that they require. They take part in leisure activities and community projects, and this builds their self-esteem. Christmas was celebrated and enjoyed by children and staff alike. The children are able to recognise and take pride in their achievements.
- Children now have an upstairs games room, which is an additional area where they can relax or engage in activities which they enjoy.
- Placement planning has improved. Children are safe at the home due to staff supervision and knowledge. Staff keep consistent boundaries and give clear messages to the children about keeping safe. Risk assessments identify known risks and guide staff in the control measures to reduce risk.
- Leaders and managers maintain good oversight of the service and monitor the progress made by each of the children. Actions are taken promptly to improve or adjust care as and when the need arises. The manager has continued the development work of the previous interim manager, who is now his area manager. This ensures a continued focus on improvement of the home.

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(s):

- Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The children's guide should help children to understand:
 - what the day-to-day routines of the home are ('what happens in the home');
 - the statement of purpose of the home (the care that they can expect to receive while living there);
 - how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure;
 - how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible; and
 - how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and managed by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
08/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/06/2015	Full	Good
18/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children have very positive relationships with the staff. They feel respected and valued. Staff invest time with the children. They ensure that they are available to spend one-to-one time with them upon their return from school, and actively support them to develop their interests, including pool and football. As one social worker commented: 'I think that he feels valued and respected by staff. His experience is of warmth and patience. He feels liked and he likes them. He is comfortable in the home. The relationships with staff are boosting his self-esteem.' Each child has good attendance at and engages well in their individual full-time education programmes. For some, this is excellent progress. Social workers reflect that the quality of the service has made a big difference to children's engagement in education. As one social worker said: 'My child is out of school and the manager has been proactive in advocating for him, in terms of tuition and school place.' The children benefit from a good approach to their health. The manager has proactively sought children's looked after medical reports to identify any health needs. Staff encourage the children to attend routine health appointments. For those needing additional services, such as therapy, staff provide close support and preparation. The children fully engage with the in-house therapeutic provision. Staff work in partnership with health services to improve children's health and well-being. Priority is given to the needs and wishes of children. They each confirm that they feel that they have a voice in the home and are involved in their care planning. Children are supported to develop and to maintain social relationships within the home, as well as outside. They also have a range of opportunities to take part in planned activities and to access community resources. Examples include football club, skateboarding, trampolining, swimming, beach walks and the cinema. As a result, children learn new skills and grow in self-confidence. Children develop their independence at a pace and level appropriate to their individual age and circumstances. For some, this may be improving bedroom tidiness, personal hygiene, cooking and learning friendships safely. Positive working relationships with family members ensure that children are supported to maintain contact with those who are important to them.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The home provides a safe environment for children who have previously experienced changeable and unsafe situations. Through close supervision from caring staff, who use humour as a common strategy, the children have developed a sense of safety and trust in the adults who care for them. Potential hazards relating to each child are identified, and the detail used effectively to inform safeguarding arrangements. Staff are appropriately knowledgeable about the vulnerabilities of the children living at the home. Knowledge is underpinned by safeguarding training, which includes internet safety and exploitation. As a result, staff clearly understand their role in the protection of each child. The children have individualised risk assessments with clear plans to minimise risks. Regular updating of risk assessments means that risk planning reflects children's current situations. The manager ensures that safeguarding procedures are in place and that staff are well versed in them. He 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. Currently, there is one child who has made three serious allegations. The risk assessment for this needs to link to a plan to reduce physical holds, as well as the future planning of staffing levels, and to include a level of independent scrutiny. Positive behaviour is consistently promoted and boundaries are maintained. The children engage fully in the reward scheme and respond well to positive reinforcement. Children recognise when their behaviours have improved and are proud of their progress. Staff are aware of the group dynamics and are skilled in de-escalation techniques. Physical holds are used only as a last resort and in order to safeguard individuals. The log recording holds does not meet the requirements, although full information is on a comprehensive incident report. No children have gone missing from this home during this inspection period. The staff have a good understanding of how to safeguard them, should this happen. Key workers demonstrate a keen understanding of what is currently going on in the life of their key young person, and take appropriate action. This may include conferring with health professionals and seeking a review of medication. A full, permanent staff team provides care to the children. Arrangements for recruiting staff are safe and effective. Children live in a safe environment. All necessary health and safety certification is in place. However, some elements of the home are not as welcoming or nurturing as others. The bathrooms, kitchen and hallways are showing signs of damage and require attention.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager has been in post for eight months and is registered with Ofsted. Service development has been given a high priority since the last inspection, when significant shortfalls were identified. The manager has continued the development work of the previous interim manager, who is now his area manager. This ensures a continuation of focus on improvement of the home. The previous requirements have all been met, including the appointment of a manager, clearer recording, quicker escalation of issues to partner agencies, improved staff stability and more effective staff supervision. As well, the manager has quickly grasped for himself the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He has evaluated all aspects of the service and has put a development plan in place, outlining areas that require improvement and how this will be achieved. He has also revamped areas of the home, such as by creating an upstairs games room. The children have an additional area where they can relax or engage in activities. They very much enjoy playing pool in this area. An independent visitor comes to the home regularly. He identifies the pertinent issues and provides professional challenge to the manager and organisation. He submits a report to the relevant authorities, including Ofsted. These include his professional evaluation on how the conduct of staff is promoting the children's well-being. Staff receive effective supervision every month. This provides staff with the chance to review and reflect on the children's progress and needs. It affords staff an opportunity to review their own performance, development needs and the running of the home, and how best to develop and improve the standard of care and support provided. The registered manager feels supported in his role, and staff say that all the managers have an 'open door' policy so that support and advice are always available. Staff enjoy their work and feel part of a strong team. Comments included: 'we pull together', 'we get good support, including from the manager' and 'it's fun, but it also has its moments'. All staff who are required to have, or are in the process of completing, their level 3 diploma. Staff have recently completed training in infection control, and countering child sexual exploitation (which was tailored to the needs of this home) and substance misuse. There is a team structure which includes a senior role, who is a good role model for both the staff team and the children. The staff group is now more stable, and members are developing individual responsibilities. A notable service development is the steps introduced to strengthen placement matching. This ensures that the needs of each child are considered carefully before	

accepting a new admission into the home. The children have quickly settled into the home. The children's guide has been revised, with consultation of one child. However, it lacks crucial information, such as the other organisations that children can contact.

Staff regularly review detailed care plans. These plans remain live documents, which inform staff about changes to the children's needs and promote a consistent approach to their care.

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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance, 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017