

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	02/11/2016–03/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC023744
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	Donna Gallagher
Inspector	Maire Atherton

Inspection date	02/11/2016–03/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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

SC023744

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The skilled and established manager successfully leads the staff team in forming positive relationships with children. These relationships create stability and provide a solid foundation for children to develop and make progress. A parent commented, 'It's the longest he's been anywhere. He's growing to be a lovely boy.'
- Children are and feel safe in this home. A parent observed, 'He is definitely safe there.' Staff are skilled at engaging with children so that they enjoy being with staff and rarely see the high supervision level, a significant protective factor in safeguarding, as intrusive. Behaviour management is a strength of the staff team. Children are learning how to manage their responses to situations and responses that they do not like and express this verbally, rather than through their behaviour.
- The voice of the child is central to their care. For example, staff actively involve children in risk assessments and the evaluation of significant incidents.
- The staff team is equipped for its role through a sound induction and training programme alongside a good level of support and supervision.
- Children speak very positively about the range of activities that they do in the home. A parent reported, 'He loves all the activities he does.'
- The areas identified for improvement include a review of the fire safety risk assessment and the fire zone plan, more detail about the therapeutic provision in the statement of purpose, consideration of how to provide another communal space and children's access to a phone. Other shortfalls primarily relate to ensuring that a range of records and policies are accurate, up to date and comply with regulations.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home, the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)). In particular, ensure that the fire risk assessment is comprehensive, that the means of escape from the home are suitable and that the house floor plan clearly identifies the zones for fire detection.	31/12/2016
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1)). In particular, details of any healthcare or therapy provided, including details of the qualifications and professional supervision of the staff involved in providing any healthcare or therapy, and information about how the effectiveness of any healthcare or therapy provided is measured, the evidence demonstrating its effectiveness and details of how the information or the evidence can be accessed.	15/01/2017

Recommendations

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

- Medicines must be administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.15). In particular, ensure that there is consistent information across records about the time that a medicine is to be given.
- Children in residential care usually live in a group environment, and so it is particularly important that they can spend time away from other group members. Staff should respect children's privacy and support the other children living in the home to do so. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality

standards', page 16, paragraph 3.17). In particular, consider creating an additional communal space in the home.

- Children's homes have a duty to provide access to a telephone that children can use privately (Regulation 22 (3)(a)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.17). In particular, consider how children can contact external agencies without having to ask staff.
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36). In particular, ensure that all sanctions are recorded in the designated record to enable full scrutiny.
- The behaviour management policy should set out how staff are trained and supported to meet the child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.37). In particular, ensure that the policy is updated promptly to reflect the current methodology being used by staff.
- Children must be listened to and enabled to report any allegations at the earliest opportunity. Staff should report any allegation of abuse immediately to a senior manager within the home. Any allegation of harm or abuse must be addressed in line with the home's child protection policy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.17). In particular, ensure that separate records are maintained of any allegation and the action taken in response.
- The home's policies and procedures around the protection of children should reflect any requirements of other relevant legislation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.22). In particular, review policies and procedures to ensure that staff have easy access to current guidance which is effectively cross referenced.
- As set out in Regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1). In particular, ensure that any gaps in employment history are identified and satisfactorily explored.
- Under Regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulations that came in to effect in January and April 2014. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph

15.1) In particular, consult with appropriate local services.

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of Regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see Regulation 33 (4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8). In particular, ensure that records show how the identified additional support needs of staff have been met.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional and/or behavioural needs. This privately owned and managed children's home is part of a larger company which has a number of similar homes in the area. Children may attend the education provision offered by the company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/10/2015	Full	Good
19/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/09/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children enjoy good relationships with staff. This provides them with a secure platform from which to make progress, particularly in respect of their behaviour. All the children could give examples of changes, since living in the home, which they have made to their responses when faced with situations that they do not like. One child said that he is rarely held and another child said that there is less damage in the home. A parent said, 'He's a lot calmer and this has helped him to join in activities that he couldn't before.' Children say that they trust staff and would tell them about any concerns or worries that they may have. Children know how to complain. Staff respond positively to the day-to-day grumbles that arise and manage the very few complaints well. Staff are sensitive to the potential areas of conflict between the children. This awareness enables them to effectively promote positive relationships between children in ways that the children understand and accept. For safeguarding reasons, none of the children have a mobile phone and have to ask staff to use the house phone. This does not provide them with the facility to contact external agencies, for example ChildLine, without asking staff. Staff demonstrate their concern and care for the children in all their interactions with them and planning for them. A parent described the staff team as 'patient and kind'. Staff adhere to routines in a non-institutional way. They successfully manage transitions, which can prove difficult for some children. Negotiation is a strength of the staff team, enabling children to make choices within a well understood and accepted framework. This is underpinned by a reward scheme that children are familiar with and consider fair. In this way, children incrementally learn the benefits of socially acceptable behaviour. Children know what is expected of them and what will happen if they break the rules. All children have been held by staff, they say that they understand why it was necessary for staff to do this. Staff discuss the event with children and record their opinions, which staff encourage them to sign. Staff effectively support children to ensure that their health needs are well met. For example, they follow up emerging concerns or observations so that children get the health support that they need. Staff prepare children to talk to health specialists and use key worker sessions to good effect. For example, they talk about recognising body changes as an emerging adolescent as part of the preparation for a discussion about sexual health. Staff are trained in the safe management and administration of medication and this is achieved. However, there was one instance of a discrepancy in the medication records about the time that a tablet should be given to a child. Children know what a healthy diet looks like and which member of staff is the best cook. They work with staff on creating the menu each week. Staff	

are creative in how they engage children with healthy eating and good choices, for example the 'fruit push' was described as successful and fun.

Children who have not previously engaged with education have made good progress in achieving high attendance levels at school provisions suited to their individual needs. Staff participate in effective and frequent liaison with schools to share strategies. This has proved positive in achieving consistent responses to behaviour that enable children to learn.

Children's views are important to the staff team. Staff are proactive in gaining views through individual key worker sessions and regular house meetings. Children know about their plans. A significant achievement is that all three children have lived in the home for a year or more. Staff encourage and support children to attend their reviews to enable them to say what they want. For example, one child has stated his wish to have some unsupervised time in the community and the manager is working on this, with due consideration of the necessary safeguards.

The children were unanimous in their praise of the range of activities that they do. These include football training and trampolining club. They also like the games that they do with staff in the home. The chocolate game is a favourite.

The house is subject to extreme wear and tear. Maintenance is prompt and ongoing. Children have input into the decorating choices. Their bedrooms are as they like them. One child has made significant progress in having furniture in his room and another is beginning to add more personal touches. As part of the development plan, the manager has requested substantial work on the garden and a refurbishment of the dining area in the basement, a popular area for socialising. This and the lounge on the first floor are the only communal areas. This has the potential to cause tension when a room is required for a meeting.

Children and their families benefit from contact that is effectively supported by staff so as to make it a good experience for all those involved. A parent described the positive difference of having a member of staff from the home supporting contact rather than a support worker from the local authority. This parent said of a member of staff in this role, 'He is not intrusive. He manages to make it feel like a normal family day out.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children feel safe in the home. They are confident that staff will do what they need to in order to keep them and others safe from harm. They describe this particularly in relation to how staff help them to recover when they lose self-control. Staff have built good relationships with children and these are key in their skilled management of the behaviour of children. This is underpinned by detailed behaviour management plans. Staff effectively implement these plans and so	

provide children with a consistent response that over time leads to changes in behaviour. Staff are quick to praise children for what they are doing well, with all their achievements recognised, no matter how small. Children welcome the emphasis on reward and have a very good understanding of how it works in practice. The accounts of the use of physical intervention are well recorded. Staff take time to gain and record the children's views and these are considered in the management evaluation of these records. Staff apply sanctions infrequently, and any such use is proportionate. Children talk about helping to repair the damage that they have caused, filling holes in the wall for example. There was one instance of a sanction not recorded in the right place. The organisation has changed the accredited behaviour management method used in the home and staff have been trained in this. The behaviour management policy is under review and does not yet reflect the method that staff are currently being trained in.

Staff vigilance has secured the safety of children. There have been no instances of children going missing. The presence of staff ensures that bullying is minimised and successfully challenged when it does occur.

Staff are trained in, knowledgeable about and know how to implement safeguarding procedures. There was one instance when an allegation by a child made during a physical intervention was not separately recorded, although it was appropriately followed up with no further action required.

Staff effectively implement the strong risk assessments that inform the care that they provide for the children. Key workers share these documents with children and record their views and comments. This provides staff with agreed detailed strategies to reduce a range of identified risks. Children are working towards taking age-appropriate risks, in negotiation with staff. For example, one child is aiming towards attending a coaching session unaccompanied by staff as a first step.

Staff are proactive in ensuring that the environment is free of hazards to children. There are sound health and safety systems that ensure tests and routine servicing on equipment takes place as required. The fire risk assessment does not address the issue of a fire exit which is not openable without the use of a key. Fire detection zones are not clearly identifiable on the house floor plan.

Staff have some knowledge about the risks arising from the location of the home. Their active supervision of the children mitigates against these risks. The location risk assessment is not fully informed by consultation with others, for example the local authority that could have local intelligence on factors in the neighbourhood that may present risks to children.

There is a wealth of policies and procedures in the home. These do not always cross reference effectively, neither do they in every case reference the most recent guidance.

The organisation is generally very thorough in the implementation of good recruitment practice. For example, the approach to obtaining references exceeds the requirements of the regulations. This inspection found one instance where a short gap in employment history had not been identified.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The suitably qualified and experienced manager leads the staff team very well. Alongside a small stable core group of staff they have supported the children through changes in the composition of the staff team since the last inspection. The organisation has set up a work group to review recruitment to determine if there are improvements to be made so that successful applicants are retained. Despite the best endeavours of the organisation, they have been unable to appoint a female member of staff to join the team. This remains on the recruitment agenda. The statement of purpose has been updated to show how the home promotes appropriate role models of both sexes, to meet the sole requirement of the last inspection report. Staff are deployed to meet the needs of children, with either two or three members of staff on shift. They are skilled at providing the children with the high supervision levels that they need. It is sometimes a challenge for two members of staff to meet the competing demands of three children but they generally achieve this well through structured shift planning. The on-call system may also be used to provide additional support if required. The manager's detailed workforce development plan is implemented in practice. Staff benefit from regular supervision and team meetings, which have a clear focus on children and their needs. This staff support provides them with opportunities to reflect on and develop their skills in working with the children. For example, external professionals have attended team meetings to consider ways of working that best meet individual children's needs. On occasion, the management response to the identified support needs of staff have not been thoroughly recorded and so do not show how these additional needs have been met. Staff benefit from a good training programme, which underpins the induction and development of staff. The organisation is seeking the views of staff on the induction programme to identify areas for further improvement. Those staff who are required to do so hold the necessary qualification, with more recently appointed staff appropriately enrolled to achieve this. The manager actively monitors and evaluates the quality of the service provided. This, alongside the monthly independent visitor reports, informs her development plan for the home which sets out the key targets for the next period. The statement of purpose describes what the home does. The reference to the therapeutic interventions is broad brush. The supporting information has been under review since January 2015 according to the policy file in the home. The team have established good partnership working with a range of professionals. These include external health professionals and education staff, both within and outside the organisation.	

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 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 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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