

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023744
Inspector	Janet Hunnam
Type of inspection	Full
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	Donna Gallagher
Date of last inspection	26/02/2014

Inspection date	25/09/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered for up to three children or young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
13/08/2013	Full	good
25/03/2013	Interim	good progress
20/11/2012	Full	good

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are making significant progress at the home especially when taking into account their starting point at the time of admission. Highly individualised support helps young people develop trusting relationships with staff. This increases their confidence and self-esteem so they feel valued and respected. This approach provides opportunities for staff to talk through issues with young people and consequently reduces the incidence of young people's risk-taking behaviour. Young people's communication skills are improving and young people who moved to the home with low levels of self-esteem have been able to grow within the environment and feel more confident.

Young people benefit from close attention to their health needs. Staff support them to lead healthy lifestyles and they receive specialist guidance and intervention when necessary. Consequently, young people's substance misuse has ceased and staff are working with young people who smoke to help them give up. Young people are developing emotional resilience, a more positive self-view and ways of coping with their frustrations and anger without resorting to challenging behaviour. Some young people's behaviour has improved to the extent that their medication has been reduced. Young people recognise the progress they are making. One young person commented 'now if I have a problem with someone, I don't flip but talk about it'.

Educationally, young people are making considerable improvement. Young people who were disengaged with school are now attending college and are enthusiastic about pursuing a course that excites and interests them. A young person commented that they 'love school'.

Young people have improved family relationships because of the home's proactive support in helping them stay in contact with their families in accordance with their placement plans.

Staff prepare young people for the transition to independence and adult life. Structured pathway plan programmes enable young people to acquire life skills such as budgeting, shopping, cooking and laundry, to prepare them for the reality of taking responsibility for themselves. Staff encourage young people through their target and reward scheme to participate in daily routines, gradually developing their confidence in daily living skills in preparation for adulthood.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people thrive in the home as a result of nurturing, caring relationships with staff, which provides them with a secure base of stability and trust. A strength of the home is how closely staff listen to young people, take time to explain with honesty, ensuring they understand. Staff are responsive to young people, giving them confidence to trust staff and react positively to the support offered to them. All young people are extremely positive about the home describing it as 'awesome', 'great' and 'cool'. One young person stated that Artillery House is 'perfect and the staff are perfect'. One gave the reason for his superlative: 'because of the staff, activities, food, everything' and another that 'everything about the home is good'. Relationships are warm and good-humoured. Staff clearly enjoy being in the young people's company and appreciate their unique qualities. Consequently, young people know they are valued and respected and are growing immensely in self-confidence and self-esteem. A parent stated that their son 'is very happy at the home'. Discussion with young people clearly confirmed this response. They enjoy living at the home and are consequently flourishing and achieving positive outcomes.

There is a strong sense that young people's views are important. Through positive interactions, young people put forward their views informally on day-to-day matters. Weekly meetings with young people provide a forum for staff and young people to discuss the week ahead, plan activities and menus, reflect on young people's behaviour and their progress in education. These group meetings are important in establishing the culture of the home, allowing discussion on important topics such as bullying, respecting others and explanations of the reasons for house rules. Time taken by staff to listen and explain to young people helps build their feelings of self-respect and their knowledge that their views are appreciated. There have been no complaints by young people but they are aware of the process.

Comprehensive care plans identify young people's individual needs and the support they require to make progress in all aspects of their lives. Staff update these plans regularly and evidence the progress young people are making. Young people have frequent key work sessions on topics related to their care plan with goals and targets linked to a reward system. The Registered Manager undertakes a key work session with young people following their looked after children review, ensuring they are fully involved in any changes to their care plan resulting from the meeting. These processes ensure young people are fully involved, with an understanding of their development needs and their progress, thus promoting positive outcomes.

Young people live in an environment that actively supports their physical and psychological well-being. Staff monitor young people's physical health closely and they receive relevant support from health specialists according to their needs. This support includes liaison with a speech and language therapist and weekly therapy sessions to support emotional development. Such specialist input is enabling young people to make significant progress in expressing themselves and appropriately managing their frustrations with on-going support from staff. Staff encourage young people to lead a healthy, active lifestyle and develop healthy eating routines. This allows young people to practice healthy patterns to move forward to adulthood. A

robust system for the administration of medication is in place, ensuring staff administer medication safely.

Staff actively promote young people's education within a culture that supports and encourages learning. Staff liaise with schools and colleges to ensure they are providing the level of individual support for young people to attend and make progress with their education. Support includes assistance with individual reading programmes and close communication with college tutors to support young people's transition to a new learning environment. Currently young people are making excellent progress with very good attendance and reports of good progress. During leisure time, staff encourage young people to pursue individual interests. Some young people are involved in local community sporting club activities and an army based group. Others participate in community facilities such as swimming and pool. Young people are benefitting from these experiences by acquiring social skills, developing appropriate behaviour and building self-confidence. Staff encourage young people to widen their interests and currently are supporting a young person to improve the garden by creating flower and vegetable beds thus supporting them to use their leisure time positively.

Young people live in a pleasant, comfortable home close to local amenities. Improvements to the home are currently underway including redecoration, new carpets and bathroom refurbishment. Staff encourage young people to personalise their bedrooms and redecorate to their personal taste, which helps them develop a sense of identity and belonging at the home.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Structure and boundaries enable young people to feel safe at the home with strong relationships between staff and young people underpinning their safety. Young people report they feel safe at the home and parents have no concerns regarding their safety. Staff are vigilant for signs of bullying and address this issue together with respect for others, in group meetings and individual key sessions. This proactive approach enables young people to develop their understanding of appropriate peer group relationships. Staff are competent and appropriately trained in safeguarding procedures. Any issues of a child protection nature are suitably managed and referred to the relevant authorities. Projects on specific issues such as beach safety and keeping safe near railways enable young people to be aware of dangers they face and how to keep themselves safe in the community.

Clear procedures are in place if a young person is absent from the home without permission, in line with local police protocols. Currently young people are not leaving the home without permission though since the last inspection there have been frequent incidents of a young person being reported as missing. In line with protocols, a safeguarding meeting was held involving the local police, social worker, youth offending service and independent reviewing officer. A decision was made to

end this young person's placement due to safeguarding concerns and the local authority sought an alternative placement. Comprehensive vulnerability risk assessments are in place to alert the police to young people's specific needs if they are reported missing. Other young people with a history of being reported missing have made considerable improvement in this risk-taking behaviour. From frequently being reported missing, incidents have reduced to just one report since the last inspection. Staff understand the reasons for this behaviour and are proactive in supporting young people to avoid being reported as missing. For example, liaising with social workers to arrange appropriate contact with family and friends to avoid young people visiting their family without permission and developing the home as a place where young people enjoy their time and are happy living there. Staff are aware of the risks young people may experience when they are away from the home. They have received specific training in child sexual exploitation to raise their awareness of possible signs that young people are being exploited and to ensure any concerns are referred appropriately to safeguarding authorities. Staff address on-line safety through key working and demonstrate appropriate awareness of the risks young people face when using the internet.

Staff have a positive ethos of promoting appropriate behaviour and use physical intervention as a last resort. Staff receive training in using physical intervention strategies but de-escalation strategies to support young people and calm them during times of distress and challenging behaviour are effective. No restraints at the home have been recorded since 2011. This is testament to the excellent relationships between staff and young people and staff's understanding and knowledge of the young people. The Registered Manager is a qualified trainer for the use of physical intervention and staff and young people benefit from her expertise in managing young people's difficult behaviour. Staff also rarely use sanctions. One sanction has been recorded since the last inspection, again demonstrating staff's effective behaviour management strategies and young people's continuing improvement in their behaviour.

Excellent health and safety measures are in place to protect young people and staff from the risk of harm. Staff implement regular fire safety checks and fire drills. Robust recruitment procedures safeguard young people and ensure that only appropriate adults care for young people.

Leadership and management

outstanding

Young people benefit from effective management and clear leadership. The manager has been in post since March 2012 and is registered with Ofsted. She is suitably qualified for the role. She provides valuable support and guidance for the staff team and clearly understands the needs of young people living at the home. The needs of young people are central to practice, planning and development with all decisions focusing on their best interests and promoting their development and progress.

No complaints have been received by the home since the last inspection. The requirement and recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed. Staff rigorously check young people are wearing their seat belts when travelling in a vehicle. Refurbishment is continuing at the home, including re-organisation of the office. Menus show evidence that the home provides healthy, nutritious meals for young people.

The home has a development plan in place that clearly outlines the areas for improvement and demonstrates the home's capacity for continuing improvement. The Registered Manager leads a committed and enthusiastic staff team who aspire to provide high standards of care to benefit young people and provide them with opportunities to enhance their future life chances. The statement of purpose is clear and informative. The home meets the expressed aim of providing a caring, nurturing 'family' environment where young people feel healthy, safe and secure and where they are able to grow, develop, achieve and flourish.

Monitoring of the home is robust to maintain high standards of care. The Registered Manager checks records on a weekly basis and compiles detailed internal reports, which are submitted quarterly to Ofsted. Monthly reports from an external visitor are detailed and comprehensive and add further value to the quality assurance process to maintain standards.

The staff team work closely together to provide consistent support for young people enabling them to make progress and feel safe. Staff report a real sense of working together for young people's best interests with no sense of hierarchy amongst the staff team. Training has a high priority with staff receiving input on specialised areas to meet the needs of young people ensuring they have the knowledge and understanding to perform their role effectively. Staff report that support from the Registered Manager and senior staff is of high quality and they are available to discuss any matters of concern at any time. Staff receive regular supervision ensuring they are competent and confident in meeting young people's complex needs.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.