

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023746
Inspector	Marian Denny
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	Martin Ian Jones
Date of last inspection	24/02/2014

Inspection date	06/01/2015
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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	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This children's home provides young people with the opportunities to achieve positive outcomes. Young people live in a nurturing and supportive home environment, which provides them with consistency, structure and routine. This enables them to make good progress. As a result, young people have made improvements in their health, education and social relationships, including those with their family. There has also been a significant reduction in risk taking behaviour, including incidents of missing from care. Some young people have also returned home to live with their families. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff. They feel safe and like living in the home. Social workers, independent reviewing officers and parents are very happy with the quality of care and the support that their young people receive.

Staff are very committed, experienced and skilled in supporting young people. They also have a clear understanding of young people's needs, have insight into the reasons why young people present challenging behaviour and know how best to support them. Their knowledge of young people enables them to support young people to increase their ability to manage their feelings and frustrations constructively. The manager and staff have established strong working relationships with young people, parents, social workers and other agencies to make improvements in young people's lives. The communication with parents and families

means that young people are supported more consistently by the significant adults in their lives and this helps them feel settled and emotionally secure.

The manager provides strong leadership and effective management. He fully understands the strengths and shortfalls of the service and is effectively using quality assurance systems to develop the service. He is increasingly assertive with partner agencies in order to ensure young people are provided with the support and services they need.

The areas for improvement identified at this inspection relate to ensuring the decoration and maintenance of the home is of a high standard and revising the children's guide so that it contains the contact details of the independent reviewing officer should a young people wish to raise a concern.

Full report

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
24/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
19/09/2013	Full	outstanding
26/03/2013	Interim	good progress
06/11/2012	Full	outstanding

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated, including the immediate outdoor space (NMS 10.3)
- ensure the children's guide includes a summary of what the home sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights and specifically how a child can contact their independent reviewing officer. (NMS 14.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Despite the fact some young people have not been living in this home very long, they are happy and settled. They all benefit from highly individualised care which meets their unique needs and personal preferences. This enables them to reach their potential. Young people enjoy good relationships with the staff, they feel comfortable with them and can trust them. As a result, young people are able to discuss any concerns with staff and know that these concerns will be efficiently addressed.

Young people have a genuine choice about contact with their family and have every opportunity to maintain good relationships with their parents and families. Family contact is planned and the contact arrangements consistently follow young people's care plans. Staff actively listen and take into account young people's wishes around seeing their families. This ensures staff can effectively communicate and work effectively with young people, families and social workers. It also makes sure family contact is a safe and rewarding experience. In addition, it helps young people to understand their backgrounds and maintain their sense of identity.

Since moving to this home young people are benefiting from improved sleeping and eating routines, which is vital to their continued good health. Consequently, their health outcomes are improving. They are gradually enjoying healthier diets and being involved in physical exercise, including playing football and cycling. Young people are increasingly developing a good understanding about the importance of healthy lifestyles and key health risks. Overall, they are gradually making positive health choices and thereby improving their health. Some young people are taking more responsibility for their own health needs, including keeping health appointments, accepting help and support with their physical, emotional health and making informed choices about medication. Young people's risk taking activities have also reduced, for example, some young people's incidents of going missing from home have significantly reduced.

Some young people's participation in education, learning and training has improved. This has resulted in them being well-motivated to attend school, college and to do well educationally. This is also true of some young people who have recently been admitted to the home. However despite excellent information being provided to schools regarding their needs, they have been unable to continue offering an education placement for them. At the time of the inspection, the home was actively working with all the relevant services to obtain the necessary education for these young people.

Young people are being prepared for the opportunities and challenges of adult life. They are generally taking on responsibilities in this respect and are being given the opportunity to build confidence in their independence skills. However, staff are keen

to develop this and young people routinely plan, cook meals and are expected to keep their rooms tidy. They are also well-supported to make positive and suitable personal relationships, as well as developing their self-esteem and confidence. They are also well-supported to study and achieve educationally. They are also supported to prepare for work and to eventually move to their own accommodation. Staff are providing good support and guidance about the emotional impact of moving into alternative provision, such as semi-independent accommodation.

Quality of care

good

Young people receive good quality care and enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff have high aspirations for young people and they are proud of their achievements. Staff are very child focused; as a result the well-being of young people is at the centre of their practice. This is confirmed by professionals and parents who speak very highly of the way staff care for young people and the progress that they are making. One parent said, 'This is the best place (young person) has ever been in and he is making good progress. The manager is excellent, incredibly helpful and the staff are very supportive. I think there should be more homes like this one.'

The staff team though relatively new are working extremely well together. They are very committed to their work and are a nurturing staff team, who understand the needs of the young people well. Staff carefully analyse each young person's needs and regularly review the effectiveness of the strategies that they have in place. This ensures young people's needs are effectively met. Young people contribute to their placement plans as well as their individual incentive programmes. This means they know what they are working towards. It also ensures they are cared for in line with their placement plans, which clearly identify their individual and diverse needs. Staff provide good support to young people and this encourages them to discuss and work through their difficulties. It also enables them to address the key areas in their care plans.

Young people have a real voice in the running of the home. The Registered Manager ensures young people's views are heard through daily routine conversations, individual work as well as young people's meetings. This means that young people are at the centre of planning for the home. Since the last inspection, young people have taken an active part in the décor changes around the home, for example in the dining room.

Staff ensure young people have health checks, which promotes their continued good health. There are also good arrangements in place to ensure the safe storage, administration and recording of medicines. Specialist workers are also actively involved with the children and young people and advise staff how best to support young people's health and ensure they enjoy good emotional and mental health. Staff provide young people with a healthy, well-balanced and nutritious diet. They also help them to understand the importance of, and encourage them to adopt, a

healthy lifestyle.

Young people are also provided with a wide range of enjoyable activities both inside and outside the home. These activities are planned by both the young people and staff. This gives young people new experiences and often leads them to taking up a new hobby or develop a new interest. This helps young people to develop greater self-confidence, as well as expanding their social networks.

Young people live in a comfortable, homely environment. Overall the house is clean, suitably decorated and reasonably well-maintained, which meets young people's individual needs, personalities and tastes. The quality of the furnishing and decoration at the home is generally good. However, some areas in the home need attention; for example, one of the doors down stairs is cracked; some of the paint on the stairs bannisters and the enamel in the bath is chipped. Staff take suitable health and safety measures to ensure that the home is free from hazards. The location of the home though provides young people with access to a broad range of local community facilities and recreational opportunities.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are happy, safe and secure at this home. Staff ensure young people are well supervised both within and outside the home. As a result, young people rarely get themselves into situations where they are at serious risk. Young people do not experience bullying in this home. However staff are very aware of the potential for a young person to bully or be bullied and are open in their discussions with young people about this. Staff are well trained in safeguarding, with regular refresher training being undertaken and they clearly understand their role and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. Since the last inspection, there has been one safeguarding incident. Staff followed safeguarding procedures appropriately and the matter has been effectively addressed to protect young people.

There is an effective monitoring system in place which clearly demonstrates a significant reduction in the frequency that young people go missing from the home. The internal working practices ensure staff respond immediately, should a young person go missing and follow the specific, individualised plans for them. Staff are proactive in attempting to find the young people quickly on the occasions they go missing, which helps to reduce the number of incidents and helps to keep young people safe. Young people are cared for appropriately on their return, allowing staff and other relevant professionals to explore reasons why young people absent themselves from the home.

The staff team are particularly successful in building positive relationships with young people and gaining their trust. However, at the same time they maintain very clear and consistent boundaries. This enables young people to strengthen their emotional resilience and to begin developing appropriate coping mechanisms to deal with their

frustration and anger. Any behaviour management incidents that do occur though are well-managed. Staff work on the basis of ensuring good behaviour and effort is positively encouraged and rewarded. This approach really beneficial as it has a very positive effect on their behaviour. As a result, staff do not impose a great deal of sanctions and those that are imposed are fair and proportionate.

Since the last inspection there have been some staff changes. However, the staff team are developing and working well together. As a consequence, young people are happy and safe. Their needs are well met and they are making good progress in their life.

Appropriate and good recruitment and selection procedures ensure any new staff are suitably cleared prior to taking up their posts. The home also has a policy of re-checking staff every three years, which ensures young people are only being looked after by suitably cleared people.

A comprehensive range of risk assessments linked to individual activities as well as general hazards, protect young people. They understand how to exit the home in an emergency. Safety checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken, with appropriate service contracts in place to ensure emergency and domestic equipment is safe.

Leadership and management

good

The manager has been in charge of the home since June 2014 and was registered with Ofsted in September 2014. He is suitably experienced and qualified to carry out his responsibilities. He has over 10.5 years' experience in residential care with children and young people. He has achieved NVQ level 3 in Health and Social care for Children and is currently undertaking a level 5 Diploma in the Management of Children's Homes. He demonstrates a real commitment to continued professional development and his eager to improve his skills and knowledge through further training.

The manager provides strong leadership and effective management. He effectively uses monitoring systems to understand the strengths and areas for development of the service in order to improve it. The staff team are well equipped and supported to ensure young people's needs are well met. As a result young people are making good progress. The manager is not complacent about his service and is keen to develop the expertise of staff so that the quality of care provided is of a high standard and young people achieve outstanding outcomes.

The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people. The deployment of staff promotes continuity of care and provides opportunities for young people to form positive attachments with staff. Staff are well supported by the manager through regular professional supervision and team meetings. This provides

staff with the chance to review and reflect on young people's progress and needs. It also provides them with an opportunity to review their own performance and development needs; the running of the home and how best to develop and improve the standard of care and support provided. Staff have suitable training opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills and to develop professionally. This includes taking on additional responsibilities and further training in order to gain additional qualifications.

The home is run in line with the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and children's guide. The Statement of Purpose and children's guide provides an accurate and comprehensive picture of the children's home and the services it provides. However, the children's guide does not contain the contact details of the independent reviewing officer, should a young person wish to raise a concern.

Since the last inspection, the manager has established and maintained a system to improve the quality of care provided in the children's home by consulting with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. Quality assurance has also improved with the manager regularly monitoring the quality and adequacy of record keeping and taking action to address any shortfalls identified. He has also ensured that the result of all statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified.

Young people's written records are securely stored and well-organised. They contain up-to-date information and provide a clear picture of their progress and experiences. Staff also keep detailed accounts of any direct work undertaken with young people and this provides a clear picture of young people's views and feelings about their lives, the progress they make and the areas for further work. These records are therefore helpful to young people in understanding their lives and the plans made for their future.

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.