

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	19/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC030797
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited
Registered person address	Ethelbert Specialist Homes, Cheesemans Farmhouse, Alland Grange Lane, Manston, RAMSGATE, CT12 5BZ

Responsible individual	Mr Leslie Davenport
Registered manager	Mrs Natascha Field
Inspector	Jan Hunnam

Inspection date	23/09/15
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	Requires improvement

SC030797

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The Registered Manager provides strong leadership and is focused on ensuring staff understand the meaning of young peoples' behaviour and build trusting, respectful relationships so that young people accept the support staff offer.
- Support for staff, with clear direction and guidance, is having a positive impact on young peoples' experience in the home.
- Comprehensive care plans and risk assessments identify young people's specific needs and guide staff in promoting and protecting their welfare.
- Staff encourage young people to pursue their individual interests and nurture their talents. Young people develop their confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging in the local community.
- Staff value young peoples' views and take their opinions seriously. Young people have access to an independent advocate to promote their point of view.
- Shortfalls identified relate to monitoring and compiling a development plan, ensuring staff receive training to meet specific needs of young people, the clarity of written guidance for staff to implement, ensuring new admissions are carefully considered in relation to the existing group of young people and the clarity of restraint records.
- Inspectors were made aware that a serious incident occurred at the setting which is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the home in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time to inform the inspectors' judgements.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every 6 months. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ('the quality of care review report') and supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45(1)(3)(4)(a))	13/11/2015
13: The Leadership and Management Standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (2)(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.	13/11/2015
12: The Protection of Children Standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to the clarity of written guidance for staff on room searches, the registered person must (2)(b) ensure that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.	13/11/2015

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that only placements for children are accepted where the registered

person is satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 56, paragraph 11.4)

- Ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to respond to the health needs of children. In particular, ensure staff receive training in relation to self-harm and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 34, paragraph 7.12)
- Ensure that records of restraint enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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 up to nine children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/10/2014	Full	Adequate
04/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory progress
21/05/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people are developing trusting relationships with staff and a more positive view of themselves through consistent and predictable care. Individualised support promotes their confidence and provides a sense of stability and security. Young people enjoy being in the company of staff who place their well-being at the centre of their practice. Young peoples' views are valued. They are encouraged to participate in young people's meetings where they have their own agenda and put forward items for discussion relating to their ideas and suggestions. Staff also consult with them individually in key working sessions when they find group meetings difficult. Complaints from young people are considered seriously and appropriate action taken, demonstrating to them that their views are valued and respected. Young people have access to, and are actively encouraged to involve, an independent advocate to promote their opinions. Young people are engaged in education. When difficulties arise staff stay in the vicinity of the school and support education staff to safely manage challenging behaviour and provide emotional support for the young person. Some young people have aspiration to progress their education and learning into further education and follow their specific interests. Staff nurture young people's talents, providing opportunities for them to realise their potential, build confidence and self-esteem. Consequently, young people become aware that they can pursue their talents such as basketball, horse riding and golf to provide fulfilling leisure activities or even consider these as future career pathways. Managers are proactive in liaising with young people's social workers to promote specific activities to the extent that agreement has been reached to purchase a horse for a young person who is pursuing horse care as a career path. Staff focus on supporting young people to acquire independence and daily living skills as they mature in preparation for adult life. In addition to practical skills, staff support young people to develop emotional resilience to cope with their difficulties and take responsibility for themselves as they face the realities of the adult world.	

Staff ensure young people's health needs are met in line with their identified needs in health plans. They receive external, specialist input when necessary including the child and adolescent mental health service and substance misuse professionals. Staff receive specialist guidance from the organisation's psychotherapist ensuring suitable and relevant strategies are in place to promote young people's emotional and psychological well-being. Some young people are showing a marked improvement in their emotional health, demonstrated by a decrease in incidents of self-harm. Managers recognise when young people's psychological health is deteriorating and seek specialist psychological assessments to inform care planning and ensure decisions are made in the young person's best interests.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The recently appointed Registered Manager is concentrating on developing a safe environment with secure and trusting relationships as the foundation of supporting and safeguarding young people. Young people are responding to this approach and report they get on well with staff and can talk to them about any concerns they may have. The dynamics of the group of young people have changed recently with a number of young people leaving the home and new admissions arriving. New residents are benefitting from a calmer environment where they are settling and learning that staff care about them. Clear boundaries and close staff supervision protect young people and enable them to feel safe. Staff closely monitor the group for any signs of bullying and manage any issues promptly and effectively. Some young people have a history of being missing from care prior to their placement at the home and continue to leave the home without permission to return to their home areas. As they settle into the home, the frequency of such incidents is decreasing. Comprehensive vulnerability risk assessments are in place to reduce the risk of harm if young people leave the home without permission. There have been 11 incidents of young people being missing from care since the last inspection. Agreed procedures with the local police are effectively applied including return interviews. The local police missing-from-home co-ordinator reports positively on relations with staff. He commented that managers are very open in sharing information, working together and are receptive to observations	

from the police to safeguard young people.

Current risk assessments demonstrate staff's understanding of the risks associated with each young person. Appropriate measures are in place to protect them from harm. Risk assessments include the local authority's risk assessment toolkit for child sexual exploitation and measures are in place to protect young people's welfare. Staff have undertaken training in child protection and safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation and are aware of the risks facing young people.

Written care planning guidance, in the form of 24 hour management plans, is aimed at directing staff on how to work consistently with young people. One area which lacks sufficient clarity is concerned with conducting bedroom checks. Managers are clear that this is different to undertaking a full room search but the guidance is ambiguous. Staff's actual practice is therefore inconsistent and not robustly monitored.

Although physical intervention is used as a last resort, the number of incidents involving restraint is high. This is due to the particularly challenging behaviour of some young people who have been unable to respond to the support provided by staff. Some of these young people have moved to specialist placements where their needs can be more appropriately met. Staff record such incidents in detail, though it is not always clear who has written the report of the incident. The Registered Manager monitors these incidents closely to ensure safe practice.

There have been three recorded complaints from young people since the last inspection. Two complaints relate to allegations against a member of staff. These have been appropriately referred to the local authority designated officer with whom the home has effective links, thus strengthening safeguarding procedures.

Robust recruitment processes are in place to safeguard young people from unsuitable adults working with them. All checks on prospective employees are undertaken before they commence work at the home.

Health and safety checks are up to date. Appropriate fire safety measures are routinely applied.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

The manager has been in post since January 2015 and is registered with Ofsted. She is suitably experienced and has been awarded a NVQ Level 5 in Leadership for Health & Social Care, Children & Young People. A part-time experienced manager supports the Registered Manager in providing committed leadership and management of the home.

Managers have focused on changing the culture within the home so that staff understand the meaning behind young people's behaviour and build trusting, respectful relationships with them. Through mentoring and role modelling, staff are adopting a different approach that is having a positive impact on young people's progress and experience. Staff report that managers offer excellent support for the team resulting in a change of staff attitude in working with young people. A member of staff commented that 'staff are stronger and more positive' as a result of the manager's clear direction and guidance.

Staff receive comprehensive training but have not received specific training in relation to some young people's individual needs, particularly self-harm and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Consequently, staff do not have a level of knowledge and understanding to confidently support young people with such behaviour. Staff receive regular supervision demonstrating effective and consistent performance management to maintain safe practices within the home.

Managers are monitoring practice on a daily basis. However, there is no system yet in place to monitor, review and evaluate the quality of care to improve and maintain high standards. A manager's monitoring report has not been sent to Ofsted since the period ending October 2014. Monitoring reports by an independent visitor lead to an action plan to remedy any shortfalls highlighted, which managers promptly rectify demonstrating that they are effective in promoting improvements in practice.

There is no formal development plan in place to show managers' understanding of the impact of the quality of care on young people's experience and progress and identification of improvements required.

Although managers carefully consider information regarding young people referred for a placement at the home, there is no record of how they have assessed the compatibility of the young person with the existing group of young people or the risks they may pose to each other. This has resulted in some young people being placed at the home and moved within a short period of time due to the level of risk and the conclusion that the home is unable to meet their complex needs. This does not adequately promote stability and permanence for young people.

Proactive work with other agencies and professionals enhances the support provided by the home. Staff regularly review detailed care plans that provide in-

depth identification of young people's needs and guidance for staff to support them. Records are comprehensive and demonstrate young peoples' progress and achievements.

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*.

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