

SC062931

Registered provider: Channels and Choices Kent LLP

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children aged between eight and 17 years old on admission. The home is operated by a private organisation. According to the statement of purpose, the home caters for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The manager has applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 31 July to 1 August 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2019	Full	Good
05/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
22/02/2017	Full	Good
05/07/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- 'Personalised care'
Care which meets each child's needs and promotes their welfare, taking into account the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)
In particular, ensure that the children's care plans take account of their ethnicity and cultural needs.
- Children's home staff should take every step to make sure that individual children and young people are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation or bullying from their peers by virtue of their gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability or for any other reason. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.12)
In particular, ensure that adults working in the home have undertaken equality and diversity training so that they are equipped with the skills to challenge discrimination and increase their understanding of racism.
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)
In particular, ensure that the reports are sent to HMCI within reasonable timeframes.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience warmth and attuned care from the adults who care for them. The children are receptive to support given to them and understand that the adults want to help them. As a result, the children feel secure, and this increases their confidence.

Adults enthusiastically invest in their time with the children and take a keen interest in their passions and achievements. There is a good match of energy between the adults and the children. Recreational activities are balanced between the children's love of gaming, and physical activities such as trampolining, football and swimming. The team encourages the children to follow their individual interests and also to try out activities that will extend their social experiences.

Children enjoy school and their attendance is good. They attend schools run by the organisation and benefit from the smaller class sizes and focused support. Adults have high aspirations for the children and work in partnership with the schools to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to the children's learning and emotional and social development.

The team pays particular attention to the children's emotional health and well-being. The wrap-around service between the therapy team, school and home helps to ensure that the children receive consistent and emphatic messages. Consequently, children learn to make links between their feelings and behaviours.

Adults place a strong emphasis on kindness, tolerance and respect, and model this behaviour with each other and the children. Children's relationships with each other are generally good, and the adults deal effectively with any issues that may arise.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Adults understand safeguarding and know their responsibilities to ensure that the children are safe and receive effective care. Risk assessments and management plans clearly set out what action needs to be taken to reduce risks.

The team knows and understands the children's strengths and vulnerabilities. Personalised positive behaviour plans guide the adults to provide support that is specific to the needs of each child. Levels of violent and aggressive behaviour displayed by some of the children have reduced. Children are learning new ways to manage difficult feelings.

Children rarely go missing. On the occasions that this has happened, adults have searched for the children, or stayed close and followed them. The team responds proactively, planning to prevent children from going missing, and robust action is taken to protect them when they do.

Adults use restraint as a last resort to protect the children, or others, from serious harm. There is good management oversight that ensures that each incident is scrutinised, to ensure safe practice. Incidents leading to physical intervention have reduced since the last inspection.

The home has its own Wi-Fi with an appropriate level of filtering. Adults are knowledgeable about the risks and benefits of the internet and social media. Children have all undertaken online safety courses. Discussions about keeping safe online are an ongoing process between the adults and children. This helps children to develop an awareness of risks and knowledge of what to do if they see something that worries them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

A change of manager and the introduction of new team members have contributed towards a period of instability for some of the children. The team is in its infancy and continues to develop skills and practice as it establishes itself. Nevertheless, the changes brought in by the manager are producing a positive impact in the home. Adults reported feeling well led and having clarity about what they are aspiring to achieve as a team.

Recommendations made at the last inspection, in relation to diversity training and making sure that care planning captures the children's identity and cultural needs, have not been addressed. Lack of information on culture and heritage undermines the adults' ability to ensure that the children develop a positive sense of their identity.

There is good management oversight of the quality of care in the home. Internal and external monitoring promotes and drives improvement. However, the independent visitor reports, have not been sent to HMCI within reasonable timeframes.

The home currently has staff vacancies, which leaders and managers are addressing through a continual recruitment drive. Recruitment practice is good, as is the induction of new team members.

The manager knows the strengths, weaknesses and priority areas for improvement of the home. An action plan is in place to ensure improvements. The manager's leadership is enhanced by an experienced senior team, which shares her vision in providing high-quality care that can help transform the lives of children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC062931

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: 31 St Georges Place, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1XD

Responsible individual: Kate Stephenson

Registered manager:

Inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, social care inspector

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