

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC068803
Inspector	Sophie Wood
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	Sidney William Coffin
Date of last inspection	13/02/2014

Inspection date	02/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good 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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Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is one of several homes belonging to the organisation. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of four young people, who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2014	Interim	good progress
20/08/2013	Full	good
07/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
25/09/2012	Full	good

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, through the on-going review and updating of safeguarding policies and procedures, that the registered person and staff work effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child protection e.g. the responsible authority, schools, hospitals, general practitioners (NMS 4.7)
- ensure there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home; specifically, ensure that that all of the areas monitored are sufficiently evaluated. (NMS 21.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress during their time at this home. They learn to make sense of their past histories and experiences. This enables them to understand why and how some of their own specific life events have occurred. Young people feel more positive about their own futures and they are beginning to take control and responsibility for making realistic decisions. Comments from young people include, 'I think this a good home because the staff look after me and help me with things I find difficult.'

Young people develop trusting and appropriate relationships with the staff. They refer to them as 'caring and a good laugh', as well as saying, 'they do tell you off if you need it.' Some very positive friendships exist within the home and there are also benefits when arguments and disagreements arise. Young people learn how to cope with sibling-type rivalry. They understand that although staff expectations may differ in accordance with their individual ages and understanding, they are all equally valued.

Young people fully engage with menu planning and food preparation. An educative approach encourages them to make healthy choices. This is further complemented by the wide range of physical activities which are readily available. Young people receive the support and guidance they need to maintain their good health. Where appropriate, appointments with external agencies, such as mental health services are fully supported. Young people's emotional needs are sensitively understood and they are able to explore difficult feelings in a safe way.

Some young people joined the home with histories of low school attendance. This is improving. Their chances of success are greatly increased because their attendance and engagement is on the rise. Comments from young people include, 'it's much better at college, I'm really enjoying it' and 'I've never really liked school but I am trying harder because I know I need to.'

Young people maintain their important and significant relationships. Such arrangements are in accordance with their individual plans. This ensures everyone's safety and enjoyment. Some of these arrangements incorporate young peoples' access to the wider community which they learn to respect and enjoy.

Daily routines are effectively used to give young people regular opportunities to practise their life skills. In accordance with their age and understanding, young people learn to take responsibilities, in line with growing up. They join in with household chores and learn to negotiate with each other and the staff.

Quality of care

good

Young people benefit by receiving consistent good quality care from a cohesive staff team. Newer staff members receive induction guidance and individually tailored support which enables them to ease into their roles in a planned manner. As a consequence, they get to know the young people in a gradual way and are given the opportunity to really understand their needs. Similarly, young people are able to form relationships with new staff at their own pace.

Young people positively engage with their own individual health care plans. Where relevant, young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their health care arrangements such as GP visits, but this practice continues to be carefully monitored. Key worker sessions target subjects relevant to each young person. These include topics such as smoking and sexual health and this can result in access to external specialist services, such as counselling.

Young people respond very positively to the encouragement, perseverance and practical arrangements which are in place to support their educational needs. From their starting points, all of the young people are engaging better in their attendance and attainment. Comments from young people include, 'sometimes the staff come to school with me' and 'it took a while but I now go to college and I'm doing a course I'm really interested in.'

Individual care plans produced by the home accurately reflect the aims and objectives of local authority care plans. Over time, such plans are reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of individuals. Young people feed into this process and are therefore more inclined to cooperate with their care plans. This increases their chances of success. Where examples of poorer progress occurs, the Registered Manager responsibly reviews placements and makes such representations to placing authorities in the best interests of individual young people.

Previous plans to redecorate and upgrade the home have come to fruition. Young people live in a well-maintained, suitably decorated environment. Their own suggestions with regards to décor and the use of the annex have been integral to these decisions. Young people value their physical environment and take great pride in their home by helping out with daily cleaning chores and tasks. Comments from young people include, 'I really like my bedroom; it's how I want it to be,' and 'the back garden is brilliant, we're always out there playing stuff.'

Keeping children and young people safe

good

Young people say they feel safe because of the actions of the staff. They talk about general rules and expectations which they try to understand and abide by. Comments include, 'we talk about stuff at dinner, like being nice to each other and not winding each other up.' Other comments include, 'you're not allowed on the internet like

YouTube and Facebook if you're not old enough. We talk about this stuff at school as well.'

Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the inter-personal relationships which exist between the young people. Some young people get on with each other more than others. Potential risks, such as bullying are identified and understood by staff's consistent implementation of comprehensive risk assessments and behaviour management plans. This practice effectively reduces the potential for bullying incidents to occur. Older young people are actively encouraged and rewarded when they set positive examples to younger children. In equal measure, appropriate sanctions are implemented when inappropriate behaviour is displayed. This practice teaches young people to act responsibly.

Staff understand and effectively implement the safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures of the wider organisation. These policies and procedures are under on-going review and amendment in order to marry with local and host authority guidance. Associated training is routinely refreshed and staff are able to demonstrate how they put such training into practice. Individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans effectively explore the individual and unique vulnerabilities of each young person. Such guidance includes real and potential risks including running away and sexual exploitation. Senior managers are able to demonstrate positive and proactive relationships with other local providers and the host authority which demonstrates a strong desire to work together in the best interests of the young people.

The use of physical restraint techniques is minimal, and non-existent for the majority of the young people. Its actual use is also reducing. The written records of such incidents are clear and accurate, and show the rationale for the use of such measures. Staff receive on-going, updated training and favour the use of de-escalation techniques in accordance with the home's own behaviour management philosophy. Young people's challenging behaviours are managed in accordance with their age, understanding and presenting risks.

The home benefits from a positive and proactive relationship with the local police. Individually tailored support plans recognise when and how individual young people may be at risk should they be absent or actually missing. Such episodes have significantly reduced and young people are safer as a result of this well-coordinated, joined-up working arrangement. Currently, the actual whereabouts of all of the young people are known and monitored by the home. Young people positively engage with this practice and negotiate their external activities with staff.

Young people live in a physically safe and secure environment. Routine health and safety checks are diligently conducted. Everyone in the home understands and abides by regular checks and practises, such as fire safety evacuation procedures. The home is physically located in a rural setting. This factor is clearly featured within the home's location risk assessment and rationale for offering this setting as a prospective

placement when referrals are received. Young people are only offered a placement here based upon the home's assessment that its physical location is deemed to be of benefit.

Leadership and management

good

The home is effectively led and managed by a suitably experienced Registered Manager. Although new to this position, the Registered Manager brings a wealth of previous relevant experience and he is currently completing the Level 5 Diploma. The planned completion of this qualification demonstrates his commitment towards improved practice. It also stands to increase upon his current understanding and expertise within the residential care industry for children and young people. Staff talk about 'excellent support' and the 'clear direction which is as the result of inclusive and directive leadership'.

Staff receive regular and targeted supervision. This is commensurate with their length of service, positions within the home and their own unique development needs. This results in a cohesive team which understands its own strengths and weaknesses. Experienced and competent staff take on roles such as key working and newer, more junior staff effectively learn and benefit from the experience and knowledge of their peers. This is successfully orchestrated by the Registered Manager and area manager.

Staff receive the training and support guidance they need. This is commensurate with their learning and development needs. A comprehensive staff training matrix is routinely reviewed and updated in order to ensure that the presenting needs of the young people accommodated are well matched to the skills and competencies of the staff in place at the home.

No requirements or recommendations were made from the previous inspection. However, the new Registered Manager has taken note of the previous manager's development plans. He has continued to drive these forward. Key working systems have continued to be reviewed and scrutinised. Young people receive good quality and improving care and support as a result. New staff are receive timely and good quality induction training and this factor benefits and enhances the quality of the care provided.

No external complaints have been received since the last inspection and the home continues to make appropriate, although rare, notifications to Ofsted and other relevant organisations. This demonstrates the home's continued desire to work openly and transparently with its regulator and placing authorities.

Internal monitoring systems, such as Regulation 33 and 34 processes continue to explore areas of practice which could improve the quality of care and outcomes for

the young people. Such reports are produced in a timely manner and they are also used by the Registered Manager to scrutinise the impact of the home's practices upon the lives and experiences of the young people. Some areas within both processes are better evaluated than others and it is recommended that this aspect is reviewed to ensure optimum outcomes.

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.