

1244384

Registered provider: Blackford Education (Schools) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company, and provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home is situated in a very rural location. Young people access the organisation's school that is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 June 2017

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Both young people are accessing full-time schooling. This is a very positive

outcome for them as they were not attending school regularly prior to living at this home. Their attendance is good and they are doing well at school.

- The registered manager is very child-focused and has high aspirations for the young people. She places their well-being at the centre of her, and the staff's, practice.
- Young people enjoy a wide range of social and leisure opportunities. They feel listened to, and say that their views are regularly sought.
- Staff promote positive behaviour well and set appropriate boundaries that help young people. Sanctions are rarely imposed. If restraint is used, the registered manager closely scrutinises the incident to determine the appropriateness of the measures used. She ensures that staff reflect on their practice and in addition, she ensures that young people reflect on their behaviour and how it imposes on others.
- The registered manager ensures that the young people's placement plan and risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. Parents and social workers speak highly of the care and support that the young people receive.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Not all areas of the home are homely and repairs that are required must be undertaken without further delay.
- Young people's views about their feelings and experience of restraint are not always sought by staff.
- Not all staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. In particular, that all areas of the home provide children with a homely environment and that repairs that are required are undertaken without delay.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1) (a))</p>	<p>31/07/2017</p>

Recommendations

- Ensure that any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and circumstances of the restraint into account. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.60)
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. This applies to a wide range of records that are kept by the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home was registered with Ofsted in November 2016, but did not admit any young people until January 2017.

From their starting points, both young people have made good progress in areas such as

their education. Their education is structured to meet their specific needs, and both young people are in full-time schooling. This is extremely positive, and their attendance is very good. In addition, one young person has made progress with not going missing.

Prior to a young person moving into the home, the registered manager obtains all the documents and information pertaining to a young person in order to make a decision about whether their needs can be met. In addition, an impact risk assessment to consider compatibility with the other residents is completed. The registered manager also ensures that there is a robust plan in place to support the young person to move into the home. One young person confirmed that he visited the home, had tea and stayed over before he moved in. He said, 'It was good to visit.' These arrangements helped to make the move a more positive experience.

Young people enjoy living at the home. One young person said, 'I like living in the country. It is nice and quiet.' Staff have built good relationships with the young people, and the young people say that they feel listened to. Young people are regularly consulted about what they would like on the menu, activities they wish to take part in and their views on helping around the house with chores.

Young people enjoy the activities both in the home and in the wider community. They know how to make a complaint, and can identify who they would speak to if they are worried or concerned. There have not been any recorded complaints from young people.

Young people are supported well by staff to maintain regular contact with their family.

The young people are in good health. Staff work well with the parents of one young person who actively takes responsibility for the healthcare appointments for their child. Young people feel that their healthcare needs are met and one said, 'Staff took me to see my doctor and they look after me.' Accident records are well maintained, and audited by the registered manager.

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

Since the home opened, there have not been any referrals made to the designated officer or to children's services. Leaders and managers have well-established safeguarding policies and procedures in place and follow them effectively. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training. Both young people state that they feel safe at the home. Parents and social workers also consider that the young people are safe, and say that they have no concerns about their safety.

Positive behaviour is promoted well and the young people are encouraged to manage their behaviour and feelings. Staff are provided with comprehensive guidance in how to support young people to manage their behaviours. Staff are clear and consistent in their approach and set reliable boundaries. Sanctions are rarely imposed.

In recent weeks, both young people have experienced certain challenges in their lives,

which has resulted in incidents of physical and verbal aggression towards staff, and some damage being made to the home. Staff use de-escalation strategies to manage incidents, and restraint is only used as a last resort. Staff complete detailed records when restraint is used, and these records are closely monitored by the registered manager. The registered manager ensures that staff reflect on how they have managed such incidents. Young people's views are sought in relation to an incident that led to the use of a restraint. However, staff do not always record the young people's views about the specific restraint that has been used. A parent and social worker confirmed that they are kept informed about why restraint was used and what happened. All staff receive training in de-escalation and restraint.

Detailed risk assessments are completed and identify the known areas of risk. Staff are provided with comprehensive guidance on how to manage and reduce the risks. These assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. There are no concerns relating to bullying, and there have not been any episodes of the young people going missing from the home. The young people do not misuse substances.

There is a robust approach to the selection and recruitment of staff. All required checks are undertaken before staff work at the home.

The physical environment is safe. The registered manager ensures that all staff and young people have taken part in fire drills and that there are regular checks on the home's firefighting equipment. The home's utilities are regularly serviced. In addition, the locality risk assessment identifies the known risks, and how to reduce these risks, due to the home's rural location, and the challenges that this may pose due to inclement weather.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively by the registered manager. This is her first management role. She has the appropriate experience and qualifications required for the role. She is undertaking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare (England) and expects to complete this by December 2017.

She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, and ensures that there is regular external scrutiny of the quality of care. Any recommendations that are made by the independent visitor are responded to efficiently.

The registered manager is very child-focused. Parents and social workers speak highly of her and the staff. A parent said, 'Staff at the home are fantastic, and the registered manager gives me weekly updates and these are very specific, good things and the not so good things.' Another parent said, 'We work alongside each other to ensure a seamless process.' A social worker said, 'I have been challenged productively by the registered manager and have had healthy discussions. It is all about the child.'

Staff are provided with a comprehensive placement plan that clearly identifies how to meet the young people's needs. These plans are regularly reviewed. Some documents

seen during the inspection were not signed or dated, and some recordings are not clear and concise.

The registered manager provides the social workers with regular updates about the young people's progress. A social worker said, 'They try and bring out the best in him, they focus on his needs and his self-esteem. I have no concerns about the quality of care, only compliments.'

Both young people attend the school that is owned and managed by the organisation. This is an extremely positive outcome for the young people. The registered manager works closely with the school to ensure that their educational needs are met. The deputy head of the school confirmed that the registered manager and staff work well with the school. Attendance by both young people is high.

Most staff have received mandatory training and specific training in areas such as equality and diversity, supporting children at risk of child sexual exploitation and supporting children who have attachment needs. Dates have been set for those staff who have recently been appointed to undertake such training.

Due to recent damage being made to the home and repairs that require completion, some areas of the home do not provide young people with a homely environment. There are holes in some walls, damage to doors and the ceiling to the dining area requires the work that has been recently undertaken to be completed. Young people say that they like their bedroom.

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: 1244384

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blackford Education (Schools) Limited

Registered provider address: Blackford House, Blackford, Minehead TA24 8SY

Responsible individual: Joan Wilkes

Registered manager: Laura Winkley

Inspector(s)

David Kidner: social care inspector

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