

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	10 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC045096
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Blackford Education (Schools) Ltd T/A Libra
Registered person address	Blackford House, Blackford, Minehead, Somerset TA24 8SY

Responsible individual	Alan Wilkes
Registered manager	Lisa Jackson
Inspector	Linda Bond

Inspection date	10 May 2016
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC045096

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The manager and staff team work exceptionally hard to ensure that young people's views, opinions and wishes are captured and responded to. The manager has, in consultation with young people, produced and created a range of evaluation tools. As a result, the home demonstrates creative and innovative practice to make sure that young people with communication difficulties are included and involved. Consequently, young people feel listened to and are able to contribute to the development of their home.
- Young people make excellent progress, both educationally and socially, and thoroughly enjoy living in the home. One young person confidently shared his views saying, 'It's nice here. I love it.' A further strength of the manager and her staff team is in ensuring that the young people experience opportunities to travel and develop an understanding of different cultures, such as by visiting Canada, Portugal, Florida and Tenerife. Throughout the home, there are many pictures, ornaments and trophies displayed. As a result, young people develop an enormous sense of achievement and pride in their accomplishments and travel experiences.
- The registered manager leads a dedicated and committed staff team where changes to the staffing structure are rare. As a result of this extremely stable and consistent team, young people have come to form particularly strong positive relationships with each member of staff. Consequently, young people, who have lived in the home for in excess of four years, experience great stability and their progress is exceptional.
- The staff team is attentive to the complex needs of each of the young people. They understand extremely well the differences, identities and behaviours of the young people, which in turn enables the young people to communicate effectively. Consequently, young people experience calm and nurturing responses that help to reduce their anxieties, worries and insecurities.
- The manager has a strong presence in the home. She has excellent monitoring and reviewing systems and is committed to securing sustained improvement in the quality of care provided. Staff report that they, 'Love working in the home, as it's fun.' They feel listened to and participate in the planning, training and development of the home. As a result, practice is constantly developing and improving to benefit the young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people. The care packages usually include the provision of education at the company's school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15 December 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
9 September 2015	Full	Outstanding
16 March 2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
16 October 2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
<p>Young people benefit from highly personalised and individualised care that captures the differences and complex needs of each young person. As a result, they thrive while living in the home because staff have an excellent understanding of their individualities. Young people are happy and very settled.</p> <p>The manager and staff team spend considerable time talking with and listening to the young people. Their commitment to spending time with the young people has resulted in the development of excellent skills to interpret the needs of each young person. The staff make excellent use of a range of evaluation tools. In doing so, they ensure that their approaches and methods of communication capture and consider young people’s views, opinions and wishes. As a result, young people remain central to the planning and development of their home.</p> <p>Young people make significant emotional and social progress. Interactions between the staff and young people are warm and considerate, and observable attachments exist. A placing social worker is able to confirm that the young person is ‘happy there and is definitely making progress.’ A stable and mature staff team, with a good breadth of knowledge and skill, provide a consistent approach to care and behaviour management. This stability has resulted in young people living in the home for in excess of four years.</p> <p>Young people’s attendance at school is excellent and, coupled with a dedicated approach to homework, young people are achieving very well and making significant progress academically. Education plans are tailored to support the young people and contribute to maximising their potential. For those young people who are moving towards independence, bespoke work experiences are identified and enjoyed by the young people. These experiences allow young people with learning and behavioural difficulties to develop skills, independence and a sense of purpose, and to be included in their community.</p> <p>The manager and staff team understand very well the importance of young people developing confidence in different social settings. Young people have access to a wide range of impressive holiday and travel opportunities, which means that they develop a good knowledge of, and interest in, travel and different cultures. Further to this, staff recognise the importance of the young people involving themselves in activities and social experiences closer to home. For example, young people help with the ‘Big Beach Clean’ activity and work at local stables. As a result, young people develop confidence and a sense of achievement from engaging with the wider community.</p>	

Young people are well supported with their individual health needs, and staff follow detailed healthcare plans. Care, encouragement and attention to detail are given to all aspects of young people's health, including the quality of meals, attendance at appointments and access to professional services. Examples include art and play therapy and a dietician. This has resulted in young people having very good health outcomes. Records from a paediatrician and dietician indicate 'Excellent progress in a young person's physical well-being that has resulted in him being discharged from their care.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
<p>Relationships between the staff and young people are attentive and caring, as well as loving and fun. Consistent boundaries and structures provide the young people with a home where they feel safe and secure. Staff are trained to a good level in child development and attachment, an important factor which contributes to young people's continued safety and development.</p> <p>The manager and staff team have an excellent understanding of the individual risks relating to each young person. They use effective risk and behaviour management plans to identify risk and to develop strategies to support the young people. The manager reports that as a staff team they benefit from regular and detailed consultations with clinicians and senior management. These offer insight and strategies to support staff in managing and working with young people with complex behavioural needs, learning difficulties and associated vulnerabilities.</p> <p>The manager and staff team have supported and cared for the young people for in excess of four years, and, as a result, understand the subtlest of communications, both verbal and non-verbal, of the young people. Staff are able to respond swiftly, positively and reassuringly to young people becoming agitated or anxious. Consequently, incidents of young people requiring physical intervention are rare. Young people do not currently go missing. Sanctions are not imposed.</p> <p>The home is very well maintained, and all health and safety checks, including fire drills and evacuation plans are routinely reviewed and updated. Young people benefit greatly from having a secure back garden with a range of outdoor play apparatus that enables them to play safely.</p> <p>The young people benefit from a staff team that has been stable and consistent for many years. They receive a variety of learning opportunities and mandatory training courses that ensure that they remain up to date with current safe practice</p>	

and research developments. Staff understood that currently, due to the young people's ages and abilities, they are supervised when away from the home, and consequently young people going missing is not a concern. However, the manager and staff team commit time through group and individual learning to understand the potential risks posed towards the young people as they become increasingly independent.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
<p>The registered manager has extensive knowledge and experience of supporting young people with additional needs, including challenging behaviours, learning difficulties and autism. She has a range of care, leadership and management qualifications and is soon to complete her training at diploma level. Her commitment to continuing professional development is an inspiration to her staff. Consequently, the staff team is led by someone who is dedicated to providing an environment that embraces learning and reflective practice.</p> <p>Through attention to detail and a dedicated approach, the registered manager has continued to build on the home's previous outstanding judgement. Regular supervisions, detailed handovers, appraisals and team meetings ensure that staff have an excellent understanding of how to meet the needs of the individual young people. Staff spoken with confirm that they receive 'brilliant' support from the manager. A comprehensive package of training, that includes both face-to-face and online learning, ensures that the staff team's practice remains current.</p> <p>Further to this, the manager is soon to complete additional qualifications in leadership and management. As a result, she is maximising the benefits of her learning by incorporating any new learning and research into tools used to monitor and evaluate the development of the home and the progress of the young people. In particular, the manager has demonstrated excellence by creating a range of consultation and feedback templates for young people with learning difficulties. The manager has taken steps to share and disseminate these tools and this learning with colleagues.</p> <p>The manager competently collates data to produce excellent development plans and reports that are shared with partners, stakeholders and families. This attention to detail, and the manager's dedication to the children, is valued by a social worker reporting, 'I appreciate the comprehensive documents provided for LAC reviews which are like a mini portfolio,' and, 'I have been very impressed by the work of the provider, particularly the manager, who is clearly very committed to the young person. Just today, she came off her annual leave to attend the young person's</p>	

LAC review.'

As a result of the strong leadership and management of a highly skilled staff team, young people are making excellent progress. Records indicate very few notifiable incidents. Those that are reported are dealt with in accordance with policy and procedure. As a result, the manager and staff have fully dealt with the recommendation raised at the previous inspection.

The manager demonstrates strong leadership qualities and is not afraid to challenge other services to secure the necessary help for young people to improve their outcomes further. For example, young people gain access to play and art therapy and additional private educational tutoring. As a result, young people are making excellent progress in their attempts to work through their worries and behaviours.

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 children looked after 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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