

SC045096

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

Inspection date: 24 October 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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: 10 May 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children are looked after by a registered manager and care team who demonstrate genuine care for children's safety and welfare. All four children continue to make good progress, educationally, socially and emotionally. They receive good-quality, nurturing care and are happy.

- The registered manager and care staff successfully build and maintain trusting, respectful and loving relationships with the children. Children say that they like the staff who care for them. They feel safe, have fun and enjoy living in this home.
- All young people attend school regularly. Those children who find it difficult to manage full time are provided with alternative learning opportunities within the community.
- Most of the children have lived in this home for over three years. They are settled and provided with stability.
- Placing social workers comment very positively about the progress that their young person has made since coming to the home. One placing social worker said: 'I have two children placed within this organisation. I cannot speak highly enough of the services and quality of care provided. Communication is excellent.'

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager's monitoring of records needs to be more effective. Currently, children's care plans, risk assessments and targets are not individualised to meet the current needs of the children. The records of physical interventions are not always completed by those people who are directly involved in the incident. In addition, the registered manager must ensure that children's views are always explored by care staff following an incident that has required the staff to hold them.
- On occasions, the registered manager has been involved in some of the physical interventions and has then monitored the effectiveness of her own practice. This does not allow for independent scrutiny and analysis of what happened.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that staff supervision sessions and team meetings provide good opportunities for staff to reflect on their work practices.
- A maintenance programme is in place and essential works are planned. However, some areas of the home are currently presenting as tired and worn. Some repairs to the environment have not been completed quickly.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/05/2016	Full	Outstanding
15/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
16/03/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>13. The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. <p>(Regulation 13(2)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that monitoring of records is effective to identify weaknesses and improvements are made. In addition, ensure that the registered manager does not review her own practice when involved in the use of restraint.</p>	28/12/2017
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, care and behaviour management plans and risk assessments need to be current and identify how young people's needs will be met. In addition, temporary staff need to have a good understanding of these plans and consistently implement them.</p>	28/12/2017
<p>16: Statement of purpose</p> <p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must:</p>	28/12/2017

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and ■ notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the review. <p>(Regulation 16 (1)(3)(a)(b))</p> | |
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Recommendations

- Ensure a running away and missing from home and care (RMFHC) protocol agreed with the police and other partners is in place for individual children who are known to run away. These should be agreed and reviewed with all agencies and be scrutinised by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.23)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive regular supervision of their practice that is specific to their role and responsibilities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 9.60)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Overall, this is a good home. The registered manager and her team provide children with consistent, nurturing, safe and well-planned care. Staff demonstrate genuine care and affection for the children whom they look after. They know children's individual needs and characteristics well. Staff are particularly good at providing a family-style environment, in which everyone understands and accepts individual differences.

Children speak highly of the care and support they receive from staff. They feel listened to and say that living here is like a family home. They like the activities that they take part in and are proud of what they have accomplished during their work experience opportunities. There are good relationships between children and staff. Children are supported well to maintain relationships with their families. At the time of this inspection, some children were going on holiday for a few days with staff to meet up with their families.

The registered manager and her care team support the children well to develop new skills, interests and hobbies. The children spoke positively to the inspectors about their experiences of flying in an aeroplane on a recent holiday abroad. The children could identify the differences in cultures and what they did to keep themselves safe during the holiday. One young person said, 'My confidence has grown, which has helped me to speak about how I feel.' He then added, 'I am now more confident and speak to new people.'

Children's placement plans are currently under review. This is because the registered manager identified that the plans do not align well with the local authority's aims of placement or clearly define current needs, targets and how progress will be measured. In addition, individuals' risk assessments are generic. They do not identify the current known risks. Currently, this is a recording rather than practice weakness as permanent staff demonstrated a good understanding of children's individual needs.

All children attend school regularly and/or alternative learning provisions. Two children are gaining work experience in the local community that they thoroughly enjoy and benefit from. Collectively, the children are making good progress from their starting points. This progress is having a positive impact on their emotional resilience and social progress.

There are lots of nicely framed photographs of children displayed around the home and soft furnishings that create a homely environment. However, in general the environment is showing signs of considerable wear and tear and would benefit from refurbishment and re-decoration.

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

Children feel safe and cared for at this home, they are relaxed and comfortable with staff

and say that they are like one big family.

The registered manager's approach to recruiting new staff is good. As a result, children are looked after by adults whose suitability has been rigorously assessed. Recruitment records are well maintained. Children are actively involved in the selection and recruitment of staff.

Missing from home incidents are rare. This is because children like living at the home. Relationships between staff and children are well-established and respectful. There has been one missing from home incident since the previous inspection. This was managed well by staff because they followed the organisation's missing from home protocol. Staff worked effectively with other agencies and, as a result, the children returned quickly and safely to the home. Independent return home interviews were completed. Despite the registered manager making every effort to obtain information about the outcome of these interviews, she has yet to receive this feedback.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep children safe and refresh their safeguarding training every three years. Staff understand the risks to children well. They give effective support and guidance that reassures children. As a result, children are learning how to keep themselves safe. One child now feels confident to go to the shops on their own, and two children go to work experience placements in the local community without needing staff support.

Since the previous inspection, there has been one safeguarding referral made to the designated officer. Although robust action was taken to safeguard the child, the registered manager did not notify the appropriate agencies as quickly as she could have. However, the child was appropriately safeguarded during the intervening period. This safeguarding concern was thoroughly investigated and it was concluded that no further action was required. The registered manager has reflected on her practice and now recognises the importance of an immediate referral.

Staff set clear boundaries for children and apply them consistently. As a result, children understand what is expected of them and feel safe in staff's care. Children say that they can speak to any members of staff if they have any worries or concerns. Bullying is not an issue. Children get on well with each other; one child confirmed this and said, 'We are like brothers and sisters.'

Incidents where children display behaviour that challenges staff are few and far between. Clear and concise behaviour support plans provide staff with guidance on how to help children to manage their emotions. Restraint is not a common occurrence, and only used as a last resort. Staff praise children for their achievements and reward systems are effective, and therefore sanctions are rarely used. However, records relating to sanctions need some improvement to ensure that they are fully detailed.

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

The registered manager has a wealth of experience and is suitably qualified. Since the previous full inspection in May 2016, the manager has been registered to manage a

second home within the same organisation. She shares her time between the two homes, which has limited her ability to oversee some of the practices in this home effectively.

The leadership of the home requires improvement. This is primarily due to a lack of effective oversight of records completed by staff. The registered manager's monitoring has not identified omissions in these records or corrected the use of inappropriate terminology documented in some of the children's records. In addition, the registered manager has failed to identify threshold variances when targets are achieved and sanctions imposed. On one occasion, the registered manager has evaluated the effectiveness of her own practice when she has been involved in restraint. To date, these shortfalls have not impacted negatively on the safety and well-being of children.

Following a review that identified weaknesses in the care planning process, the registered manager is implementing new placement plans and risk assessments. This is important as previously not all temporary staff were provided with sufficient information in these documents to help them to care for the children in the same way as permanent staff. Missing from home protocols are in place, but these documents have not been discussed with safeguarding agencies to ensure that strategies for how staff are to manage incidents are agreed.

The registered manager has high expectations of the children, herself and the staff. These expectations are communicated through regular staff and house meetings, and informal supervision sessions. However, the registered manager has not always used these meetings as an opportunity for the staff to reflect on their practice, share their work experiences and explore alternative strategies to managing children's behaviour.

The statement of purpose has recently been updated to reflect the current staffing levels and the staff's qualifications. However, information within this document refers to the wider organisation. In addition, the registered manager has not included information in this document about her management responsibilities for a second home. Neither has she forwarded a copy of the revised document to Ofsted as required.

The registered manager ensures that there is an adequate number of staff to meet the needs of the children. The organisational training programme enables the staff to keep abreast of current work practices and enhances their knowledge on a wide range of subjects.

The team is committed and offers consistent and nurturing care to children. The manager and staff team are enthusiastic and confident. Their child-centred delivery of care ensures that young people are safe and that their time in this home is memorable and positive.

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: SC045096

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blackford Education (schools) Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Alan Wilkes

Registered manager: Lisa Jackson

Inspectors

Sharron Escott, social care inspector

David Kidner, social care inspector

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