

SC476944

Registered provider: Blackford Education (Schools) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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 two children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This home comprises two conjoined terraced cottages in a quiet village. The cottages are operated as one home and consequently share a staff team and a manager.

The care packages usually include the provision of education at the company's school.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 November 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: 28 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The two children who have moved into this home since the previous inspection have both benefited from carefully planned and well-managed moves. As a result of this careful planning, the children settled in well and have made good progress.
- Both children are thriving; they are making good progress with their health and well-being, education and social skills development. This is because they receive nurturing and individualised care from a manager and staff team that understand their experiences and meet their needs. The care staff talk about the children with genuine warmth, fondness and affection.
- Children say that they are happy, enjoy living in this home and that they have fun. They say that they like the staff who care for them and awarded them 100/10. Children are happy and comfortable living here.
- Children have good access to activities that enrich their lives and experiences. With support from the care team, children plan their weekends and school holidays with activities that interest them. For example, one child enjoys his weekly archery lessons, while another child attends Beavers and is looking forward to his first overnight camp with his friends.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The records in relation to the use of restraint must be completed in accordance with the regulations, and staff must ensure that children's views about the restraint are recorded.
- The registered manager should clearly evidence how staff respond to the children's views and requests that they make.
- The registered manager must ensure that all staff are compliant with mandatory training.
- The registered manager must ensure that the risks with the home's immediate locality and emergency response times are included within the home's locality assessment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/12/2016	Full	Good
01/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/12/2015	Full	Outstanding

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>Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>Ensure that within 24 hours of the measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes:</p> <p>the duration, time, location, and the effectiveness and any consequence of the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (3)(ii)(iv)(vii))</p>	<p>29/12/2017</p>

Recommendations

- Ensure that any child who has been restrained is 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 the home is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded. In particular the registered manager should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- Ensure that staff access appropriate facilities and resources to meet their training needs. In particular, ensure that all staff have refreshed basic mandatory training. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a home that is divided into two individual houses. Each home has its own front door and garden. The children have good opportunities to share activities and spend time together. This provision gives them personal space when needed and helps to promote the children's social development.

The registered manager and her staff team provide children with consistent, nurturing, safe and well-planned care. Each child has a dedicated team of staff that knows them well and which provides continuity of care. Relationships between staff and children are warm and positive.

One child, who has lived in a lot of other homes before coming here, has adjusted to this home and settled in exceptionally well. This is because of the registered manager and her care team's ability to maintain boundaries and set good routines. This child is thriving here; he was observed by inspectors as confident, happy and relaxed in what he refers to as 'my home'.

Both children enjoy a range of activities in and out of the home. Since joining clubs, both children have made friends and their social skills have improved. At this inspection, one child showed the inspectors how well he can ride his bicycle without stabilisers now and could talk about how he keeps himself safe when cycling. He took the inspectors to the local park where he plays with his friends and told the inspectors that he is looking forward to going camping with the local Beavers group.

The registered manager is a strong advocate for the children and helps them to maintain and develop their relationships with their families and friends. She listens to the children and acts on their requests, especially when they have expressed a wish to see people who are important to them. This provides children with the reassurance that the people who are special to them still love and care for them.

Both children attend the school run by the provider. Children's attendance at school is good and they are achieving the targets that are set out in their personal education plans. Staff help children to complete their homework every day after school. This help has had a positive effect on the progress that children make.

The registered manager is particularly good at providing a family-style environment and supports the children and staff to understand and accept individual preferences and differences. Photographs of children are displayed around the home. These items provide the children with visual reminders of the opportunities that they have had, the activities that they have enjoyed and the achievements they have made in this home.

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

Young people are safe and protected, because the registered manager and care staff give the highest priority to their safety and well-being. Staff are trained in child protection and understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They know what actions to take if they have any concerns relating to the safety and well-being of children.

There have not been any safeguarding concerns, missing from home incidents or sanctions since the previous inspection. There has been one complaint, and the registered manager took appropriate action to ensure that a satisfactory resolution was reached.

The ethos of the home is that staff promote positive behaviour. Staff devise strategies, incentives and rewards to help the young people to manage their emotions and feelings. Children who are experiencing emotional trauma are provided with exceptional support from staff. This support has been particularly successful for one young person, whose relationship with staff was so secure that he had the confidence to share his early childhood experiences.

The team helps children when they become distressed and unhappy. At times, children have been physically held by staff because of the risk of harm to themselves and others. In response to one child's distress, the registered manager identified patterns in the behaviour and implemented a new approach to help the child. Consequently, the need for physical intervention reduced. Not all records relating to physical intervention are completed in accordance with the regulations and children's views about the use of restraint are not always recorded.

The registered manager has introduced new care and behaviour management plans and risk assessments. These documents comprehensively detail the needs of the children and provide staff with clear strategies about how to meet their needs and reduce risks.

The registered manager has helped children to change their perception of people in authoritative positions, such as the police. One young person now feels less anxious when he sees a police car or police officer. He now feels more at ease and likes to role-play as a police officer.

The registered manager has used information from the local police to develop the home's locality assessment. In general, this is a detailed document, but it does not refer to response times for emergency services, or any risks associated with the stream that is adjacent to the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the previous inspection, a new registered manager has been appointed who also manages a second home within the organisation and shares her time between the two homes. In addition, she has operational oversight of all of the residential homes within

the organisation.

The registered manager's motivation, work ethos and tenacity are exceptional. She has a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills. The registered manager has high expectations of the children, herself and the staff team. Collectively, the team shares the manager's child-focused approach and is motivated to provide high levels of individualised, nurturing care to the children. The staff admire and respect the registered manager and told the inspectors, 'She leads by example and is a strong advocate for the children and their rights.' Similarly, the registered manager values the care team's work with the children.

The registered manager's areas of responsibility are extensive. Inspectors met with the responsible individual to share their concerns in relation to this. Inspectors were reassured by the plan that senior leaders are implementing to actively recruit additional staff, which will alleviate some of the registered manager's responsibilities. In addition, three new administration assistants have been appointed who are helping the registered manager to keep up to date with her administrative responsibilities.

Monthly team meetings are attended and utilised well. Staff are provided with good opportunities to share their work experiences and explore alternative strategies that support children with their emotional needs. Formal group and individual supervision sessions take place regularly. Staff say that these meetings provide them with support and guidance. However, the registered manager has not always used these formal meetings to agree what actions to take in response to requests that children have made during house meetings.

Recruitment and selection of new staff are good. All new staff receive a comprehensive induction that prepares them well for their new role and responsibilities. In addition, all staff are provided with ongoing learning opportunities that include refresher courses in first-aid, safeguarding and fire-awareness. However, some records show that a small number of staff have not had refresher training in the required timescales.

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: SC476944

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blackford Education (Schools) Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Joan Wilkes

Registered manager: Gina Dyer

Inspectors

Sharron Escott, social care inspector

David Kidner, social care inspector

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