

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	12/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC485427
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	Joan Wilkes
Registered manager	Robin Edmonds
Inspector	Linda Bond

Inspection date	12/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	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

SC485427

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The registered manager works to shape and support a staff team that faultlessly meets the needs of the young person. As a team, the staff complement one another by drawing on their unique strengths and qualities. Strong and trusting friendships have formed and the young person feels safe and supported. A highly qualified and knowledgeable senior management team works closely with the registered manager to manage a package of care for the young person that is, bespoke, and individualised.
- The views and opinions of the young person, their family and appropriate agencies are captured and integrated into all plans, documents and records. This spirit of working together has resulted in the young person's outcomes improving significantly. From the young person's starting point, he is achieving well in school. His mother describes the manager as being 'amazing' and the staff as 'brilliant'.
- An excellent range of recording systems provides the registered manager with detailed information that allows him to effectively review and plan improvement. A detailed and research-informed development plan underpins improvements. Specifically, training and learning opportunities are frequent, targeted and benefit the young person's changing needs.
- The young person is living in a home that is of a very high standard. It is furnished and decorated in a style that not only reflects the young person's interests and hobbies but most importantly, his heritage. Pictures, ornaments and photographs of holidays and special occasions celebrate the young person's achievements. For example, he has been snowboarding in Canada and surfing in Portugal.

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The home is registered to provide accommodation for one young person and is run by a private provider. This is the first full inspection since registration.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
4 February 2015	Registration visit	Not applicable

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
<p>The young person has made impressive progress while living in the home. This is due to an established and nurturing staff team with an excellent understanding of the young person’s needs, and personalised, well-written plans and records which chart the young person’s progress.</p> <p>The registered manager works in partnership with the young person, family, school and local authority. A coherent and collaborative approach has ensured the young person remains central to all decision-making and plans. A particular strength of the staff team is its ability to recognise how the successful transition for a young person into adulthood requires careful planning. Staff know the young person well and have, over time, developed strong and trusting relationships with his family. As a result, the young person returns home every weekend and is looking forward to spending more time with his family once he leaves the home. The registered manager reports, ‘It’s a strength of the staff how they have built good relationships with the mum’. This point of view is verified by the social worker who says that, ‘Relationships with the home are very positive; they are very good at communicating any concerns’.</p> <p>The young person has made remarkable educational progress. Through hard work and determination by the young person, coupled with the support, high aspirations and commitment of the staff, his outcomes are very good. The young person has used this learning and support to make exceptional progress with his work experience. School reports that work experience has increased his confidence and maturity beyond recognition, and that the young person is always ‘respectful and polite’; he is ‘engaging in learning and looking to achieve good grades in GCSEs’. The young person has 100% attendance in school and at work experience, and has already identified a career with computers.</p> <p>A particular strength of the home is the staff team’s understanding of how a young person’s life needs to be balanced, and how learning opportunities have many guises. The manager, staff team and young person plan holidays and activities which enable the young person to experience different cultures and leisure pursuits. For example, the young person has snowboarded in Canada and surfed in Portugal. Consequently, the young person has developed a good range of travel and social skills, which prepare him well for independence.</p> <p>In addition to these experiences, the staff understand the significance of the young person taking part regularly in physical activities in order that he is healthy and fit.</p>	

Kayaking, camping and surfing, coupled with attendance at all routine health appointments and a very good diet contribute to the young person's continued good health. As a result of excellent nurturing care from the staff team, the young person has learnt to take a pride in his image; he is physically healthier and his emotional health has much improved. He says, 'I'm proud of how I look' and 'I feel well'.

The young person benefits from not sharing the home with other young people. The registered manager, staff team and senior managers use skill, experience and research-informed assessments to provide a home environment that is exceptionally personalised. The young person calls the home his own, saying, 'It's cool living here'. He confirms that he is involved and consulted about the running of the home. The young person is reminded of his heritage, lifestyle and experiences by the personal touches to the internal décor of the home. For example, a surf board is hung on the wall in the living room; pictures and photographs of holidays, art work and a flag from the young person's home country are prominently displayed.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
<p>Staff give the young person's physical safety, psychological and emotional well-being the highest priority. As a team, they are particularly strong in recognising the vulnerabilities of the young person as he becomes increasingly independent. An extensive range of training is provided to the staff team to support the young person. The staff team also makes good use of supervision to reflect on practice, team meetings to share and disseminate learning and attendance at workshops run by voluntary organisations. As a result, staff have a comprehensive understanding of how to keep the young person safe. They know how and why to report concerns and refer to robust procedures and processes when sharing information.</p> <p>A particular strength of the staff team is how they draw on their understanding of the young person and use up-to-date risk assessments to support him as he moves towards independence. Staff confirm that they refer to a range of very well-written risk assessments that include consultation with both the young person and his parent to support their thinking and planning. The young person's parent says, 'The staff are brilliant, they ask me for my input before they do anything'.</p> <p>All significant events, for example, missing from home, the use of physical intervention, or the use of sanctions are recorded accurately and shared with the</p>	

young person's family, local authority and Ofsted in a timely manner.

Staff use effective communication, coupled with positive role modelling, patience and compassion to promote positive behaviours. Consequently, there is no use of physical intervention or sanctions and the young person has rarely gone missing. On these occasions, staff have been swift to support the young person and he is now not engaging in any risk-taking behaviours.

The young person says he is 'happy' and 'safe', and has 'no worries'. The improved positive and mature behaviour of the young person is recognised and appreciated by his parent. During a conversation with the inspector, the parent reported, 'He's maturing every day'. Further to this, the registered manager recognises the importance of promoting and supporting the young person's relationship with his parent and, in doing so, the manager has supported the young person and his parent to gain access to a neurolinguistics learning programme.

The young person lives in a home that is extremely well maintained, homely and cosy. The log burning stove and large comfortable furniture in the living area, a well-equipped kitchen and dining room, along with garden furniture outside all help the young person to relax and enjoy his home.

The manager and staff team conduct routine checks to make sure that the home is well maintained and safe.

The home and young person have benefitted from having no changes to the staff team. Robust recruitment and induction procedures are in place to safeguard the young person.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
<p>The registered manager has a wealth of experience working and supporting young people. He has suitably qualified and is due, in April 2016, to complete a level 5 diploma in leadership and management. The manager leads a small experienced staff team that has worked together for a number of years and supported the resident young person during this period. Their long-standing professional relationships coupled with their understanding of the young person have resulted in the young person making excellent progress.</p> <p>The staff team and young person benefit from a manager who has a special interest in outdoor activities. The manager takes time to research the benefits of all activities for the young person and shares this learning with the staff team.</p>	

The experience of the staff team and the professional relationships they have with one another ensure that the young person receives good and consistent care. For example, the manager avoids using agency or bank staff to cover any absences or leave.

While it is not imminent, the manager is being proactive and drawing on the staff and young person's reflections to plan for future placements. For example, the senior management team and the manager are reviewing the Children's Guide. This document, along with the Statement of Purpose, is extremely well produced. However, the Children's Guide, in consultation with the young person, is soon to be produced in a 'Photo Box' style. This will make the guide much more modern and accessible.

All staff have received training that equips them to safely care and support the young person. They say that they feel supported by the manager and 'really enjoy' their work. They are kept up to date with the latest practice developments via emails, team meetings and supervision and, as a team, they use this learning to challenge and improve their own practice.

The manager rigorously monitors and evaluates the home. He analyses patterns and trends to identify areas for development. The home's development plan is very well written, incorporates the views of the young person and his family and focuses on improving the young person's outcomes. The Independent Visitor reports confirm the improved outcomes of the young person.

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 looked after children 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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