

# SC485427

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 two children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. 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:** 25 October 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:

- Due to the good support provided by staff, children make good progress. They

are nurtured and treated with dignity and respect. They learn new skills that help them to become more independent. One child is currently undertaking work experience. Positive feedback has been received from his employer who confirms that he is doing really well.

- Children enjoy living at the home and staff develop positive relationships with them. Children’s views and wishes are acted on, and children confirm that they feel listened to. Children are kept safe and also told the inspectors that they feel safe here.
- Children thoroughly enjoy the activities that they take part in. They are encouraged to pursue their hobbies and interests, and have new experiences and opportunities.
- Children live in a home that is very homely and welcoming. It is furnished and decorated to a high standard. This environment is further enhanced by children’s photographs, possessions and their artwork being displayed in the home.

The children’s home’s areas for development:

- The registered manager must take steps to develop a ‘core team’ of staff to ensure that children receive continuity of care and support. In addition, all staff who work in the home must take part in regular fire drills.
- The registered manager must ensure that the records in relation to the use of restraint are in accordance with the regulations, and that the children’s views about the restraint are recorded.
- Individual children’s missing-from-home protocols must be developed with the placing authority, and shared with the local police.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
09/03/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
12/01/2016	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>25: Fire precautions</p> <p>Ensure by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of a fire. (Regulation 25(1)(a)(b))</p>	31/12/2017
<p>31: Staffing of children's homes</p> <p>Ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31(1))</p>	31/12/2017
<p>34: Policies for the protection of children</p> <p>Before implementing or making an amendment which the registered person considers to be substantive to, the missing child policy. The registered person must:</p> <p>consult, and take into account the views of each relevant person; and have regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children. (Regulation 34 (5)(a)(b))</p>	31/12/2017
<p>35: 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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(vii))</p>	31/12/2017

### 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)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good-quality care and support. Staff demonstrate genuine care for the children and strive to develop good relationships with them. Staff nurture children and place them at the centre of their practice.

Children feel listened to, and the staff recognise and act on their views and opinions. For example, children are consulted in relation to activities, weekend plans and items to purchase for the home. Children say that they know how to make a complaint. Although children have not made any formal complaints, staff actively listen to their 'grumbles' and respond to these effectively.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities in the home and the wider community. They are encouraged to develop their hobbies and interests. One child gave 8/10 for the activities. Staff recognise children's skills and build on these. For example, one child has access to a vehicle that provides him with opportunities to gain more knowledge and skills in relation to car mechanics, which is a particular area of interest for him. In addition, the young person was keen to show the inspectors his model car that he has built. The purchase of the model car was an incentive to promote his attendance at school. He has built an impressive model, demonstrating his likes and skills in model building. He is very proud of his achievements.

Photo albums are kept that document children's activities and achievements. These albums are lovely possessions for children to keep, and reflect on their time living in the home.

Staff support and encourage children well to develop their independence skills. A parent confirmed this and commented that they think their child is making good progress. This view was further echoed by a social worker who said, 'The child who is living here is making excellent progress in all areas.'

Children are healthy, and a healthy lifestyle is encouraged. They contribute to the development of menus, and say that they like the food. They have access to all healthcare professionals, and specialist support is provided if required. Consequently, their health needs are met.

Both children attend school full time and are achieving well. However, one child has expressed a desire to access an alternative school, and this is actively being explored by staff. Currently, one child is gaining work experience in a retail service and is doing very well in this placement. This is his second work-place experience, while last summer he also undertook work experience in a local food outlet. These experiences have helped him to prepare for greater independence and to improve his social skills.

Children benefit from a home that is decorated and furnished to a very high standard. There are lots of photographs of children on display, with pieces of their artwork around the home. In addition, there are many soft furnishings and homely touches that provide children with a welcoming, and extremely homely, environment.

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

The arrangements to safeguard children are good. Since the last inspection, there have not been any referrals made to the designated officer, or to children's services. Children are safe and protected at this home. They say that they feel safe and that they can speak to any of the staff if they had any worries or concerns. In addition, parents and social workers also consider that the children are safe. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep children safe, and they receive regular safeguarding training to refresh their skills.

There are no concerns in relation to the misuse of substances, or inappropriate use of the internet. Bullying is not an issue, and both children say that they get on well with each other. Positive interactions between children were observed at the time of the inspection.

Staff are promoting positive behaviour effectively. They are provided with behaviour support plans that guide them in how to support children to manage their emotions and feelings. Staff praise children for their achievements, and reward systems are successful. Due to the effective reward system in place for one child, he is now regularly attending school.

Since the last inspection, there has been one recorded incident of the use of restraint. The record in relation to this does not fully meet the regulations, as the use of the intervention has not been evaluated for its effectiveness. In addition, the child's views on the intervention used have not been recorded. Sanctions have not been imposed.

Children are encouraged to take age-appropriate risks as part of developing their independence. For example, children go out to the shops and visit friends independently. This develops their confidence and self-esteem.

The registered manager has developed individual children's missing-from-home risk assessments, and a generic organisational missing-from-home protocol. Although there have not been any incidents of young people going missing from the home, individual missing-from-home protocols have not been developed in consultation with the children's placing authorities, and have not been shared with the local police. However, this shortfall does not negatively impact on the safety and well-being of children.

The registered manager ensures that the home's utilities are regularly serviced. This includes the home's firefighting equipment. In addition, regular checks are undertaken of the smoke detectors. However, not all staff who work in the home have taken part in fire evacuations.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last inspection, there is a newly appointed registered manager in post who is registered with Ofsted to manage this home as well as one other home. She has been working as a senior manager in the organisation for many years and she knows the children and staff very well. She has a wealth of experience and is ensuring that children receive good-quality care and support. She places the needs of the children at the centre

of her practice and leads by example.

The registered manager's areas of responsibility are far-reaching. Inspectors met with the responsible individual to discuss this matter. The responsible individual informed the inspectors that three new administration assistants have been appointed to assist the registered manager with administration responsibilities. Active recruitment continues to increase management capacity.

The registered manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. She has thoroughly evaluated the quality of care being provided, and has identified where improvements can be made. There continues to be regular external scrutiny of the quality of care by an independent visitor. The registered manager effectively acts on any recommendations made to improve. At the time of this inspection, discussions took place with the registered manager and the responsible individual in relation to the responsible individual commenting on the findings of the independent visitor reports, to demonstrate how she monitors the effectiveness of the home.

The home's statement of purpose has recently been reviewed and an updated copy has been sent to HMCI. This is a detailed and informative document.

A concern identified at this inspection was in relation to the use of 'non-core' staff to support the children. At present, there is a small number of 'core team' staff who work at the home. Many staff from other homes within the organisation, who know the children well, also support them. This practice does not provide children with continuity and consistency of care and support. The registered manager acknowledges this concern and is taking steps to rectify this matter.

Due to staff lone working, the registered manager has completed a comprehensive risk assessment that provides clear guidance to staff on what steps to take to manage and minimise the risks. Staff have a good awareness of how to keep children and themselves safe when working on their own.

Comprehensive placement plans and associated risk assessments provide staff with clear guidance in how to meet the young people's needs. The help that staff give ensures that young people achieve their goals.

There have been no complaints made since the last inspection.

## **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:** SC485427

**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:** Gina Dyer

## Inspectors

David Kidner, social care inspector  
Sharron Escott, social care inspector

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