

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	09/09/2015
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	C/o Pullman House, 7 Battle Road, Heathfield Industrial Estate, NEWTON ABBOT, Devon, TQ12 6RY

Responsible individual	Alan Wilkes
Registered manager	Lisa Jackson
Inspector	Paul Clark

Inspection date	09/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in 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 exceeds 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:

- Young people benefit from a child focussed environment which is well furnished, and rich in play and educational resources and amenities. Young people feel safe and enjoy trusting relationships with adults who are committed to their care.
- Care is provided by a stable and well trained staff team. This gives young people consistency and helps them to feel secure. Staff are well managed, supervised and supported by a manager who staff say is inspirational, and whom they respect.
- The home provides young people with effective placement plans and need assessments which clearly outline how their care is to be provided. These plans are of a high quality and the home work closely with placing authorities and other professionals in carrying out and reviewing them. Placing authority social workers describe the quality of care as making "positive improvements in young people's lives." and make such comments as "the home has done great work with him."
- Young people make excellent progress in their social, educational and behavioural development in relation to their starting points. This is achieved by the home ensuring that all young people receive full time education supported by an effective behaviour management programme. The home gives support to the school by care workers being actively involved in the classroom, and by supporting young people with their education in the home. All of the young people attend school full time and make progress in their educational achievement. This is in spite of them having had school attendance problems on admittance.
- Young people make excellent progress with their emotional wellbeing and in improving their behaviour. This is achieved by the home ensuring that each young person's needs are assessed by a psychologist who sees them on a regular basis and who works closely with the staff team in providing and reviewing plans of action and support. The agency also employs play therapists who young people meet on a regular basis. School, care and therapy staff work together in a collaborative way to give young people high quality care.
- The home has met all of the requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12: The protection of children standard. Ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. Specifically, that electrical sockets have safety caps. (Regulation 12(2)(d))	13/11/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a locally-based private company, which also operates another 4 children's homes in the area. The company also run a school which is inspected by Ofsted's education inspectors.

The children's home currently provides long-term and respite care for a maximum of four young people, who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
16/10/2014	Full	Good
25/02/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
24/07/2013	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people make excellent progress in their physical, emotional and psychological development in relation to their starting points at the time of admission to the home. This is achieved by high quality assessments of need, care planning and review, and in the rigorous implementation of these plans. Young people's care is individualised. and this approach is consistent across all members of the staff group school, therapeutic staff, and with placing authority social workers. The staff group is stable, experienced and well trained and supported, and this means that young people are well cared for by able and well informed practitioners. Young people enjoy living in the home and say that they have excellent relationships with staff members. One of the young people told the inspector "The staff are great and I get everything I want and I get help with everything. I go horse riding." Strong relationships with staff helps young people to develop trust in adults and feelings of security in their lives. Young people are directly supported by staff to engage in a range of educative, leisure and recreational activities which they would previously have struggled to engage with; these include ski-ing, horse riding, and meals out. This enhances their self-worth, and helps them connect to the local and wider community. Young people progress in their health, educational, social and psychological development to a considerable degree whilst they are living in the home. The organisation has a therapeutic team of a psychologist and play therapists who meet with individual young people on a regular basis. This enhances the already high level of care provided. One independent reviewing officer commented "They've done a great job with her therapeutic care and she has formed a really good attachment with her key worker." In one example of high quality care, the home has applied research based practice to support a young person with their sleeping problems which were a result of past life experiences. The placing authority social worker said that this work has been highly effective. Some of the young people placed have disabilities that require specialist care and staff have received training to ensure that they have a good knowledge of these conditions and of the medication needs of individual children and the effects of these medications. All of the young people living in the home now attend full time education in	

spite of school attendance problems on admission to the home. They are effectively supported in classrooms by a member of the care staff. Young people make improvements in their educational attainment whilst living in this home. This is an exceptional achievement. One independent reviewing officer commented "She is now attending full time education. I would be pleased for any of the children I review to be placed in this home."

Alongside well equipped gardens and a home that is well-maintained and decorated the home has recently extended the building to establish a special area for young people to use as a place to relax and feel calm.

The service actively supports the placing authority plans for the next stage in young people's lives and makes effective arrangements for young people's transitions when leaving the home. One placing authority social worker commented, "The long term plan is for him to be fostered, and although he is not yet ready for this, the home has done great work preparing him." This rigorous adherence to care planning helps to ensure that young people will have the best possible start in a future placement.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Young people say that they feel very safe and secure in this home and that staff are actively involved in promoting their well-being. One young person said "I feel really well looked after and safe here....I'd like to put my arms around the home and hug it." There is a clearly written child protection policy and procedure in place and these are well known and understood by staff who receive regular and effective training in these procedures and in other areas which help to keep the young people safe. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) reports good interagency safeguarding practice. One strength of the home is the way that it actively promotes the positive behaviour of each young person. This is done in part by arranging for them to attend regular sessions with the organisation's psychologist; leading to individualised risk assessments for each young person. A second strength of the home is the way that behaviour management and educational achievement is supported by the home's care staff who go into school classrooms on a daily basis. This ensures that the young people are able to	

maintain their education safely with a reduced risk of classroom disruption.

Individual sessional work by key workers helps young people to understand their risk assessments and their care and placement plans. Although key workers coordinate these plans for individual young people, the whole of the staff team demonstrate a clear understanding of each young person's individual care needs.

Staff receive regular training in the use of restraint. Given the starting points of some of the young people, incidents requiring the use of physical restraint are relatively low and are reducing. These incidents are subject to proper analysis by the staff team and discussed with the young person concerned. There has been little use of sanctions and any sanctions applied are proportionate and appropriate. This ensures that young people are included in the regulation of their behaviours, and in their overall individual progress.

The home takes a careful account of the characteristics and needs of each young person placed to ensure that the group of young people is well balanced.

No young people have gone missing from the home since the time of the previous inspection and there is a protocol in place with the local police to be followed in the event of a child going missing. The home ensures that the risks of the living environment and the locality are minimized by active fire safety measures, effective food hygiene and environment health practices, and the production of risk assessments in this regard, including a locality risk assessment which is reviewed annually. The home is caring for a relatively younger child, and a child with learning difficulties. The electrical sockets in their bedrooms do not have safety covers and this may present a danger of electric shock to these children.

There are thorough vetting and recruitment checks on all staff. Young people are involved in the staff recruitment process and this helps to give them a voice in the delivery of their care. There is a high level of vigilance about young people's contact with adults who come to the home, or who they may meet in the community. These measures help to ensure that young people are kept safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
There is consistent and strong leadership in the home. The registered manager is appropriately qualified and has been in post for several years; providing consistency for young people, other professionals, and staff. All staff members have an appropriate qualification in working with children and young people and several staff are supported by the organisation in undertaking higher level awards. This helps to ensure that young people are cared for by a professional and able staff group. New staff undertake an induction programme which covers all of the key elements of their work. Staff receive ongoing training and this training is regularly updated. Due to the individual needs of some of the young people staff receive specialist training in areas that further support individual young people. The management ensure that staff receive regular and effective supervision and support through team meetings. The aims and objectives of the home are clearly and accurately spelt out in its statement of purpose. Young people are provided with information about the home and their care in a children's guide. Both of these documents are comprehensive in content and regularly reviewed and updated. Staff go through the children's guide with individual young people upon admission to ensure they understand. The guide is available in a format that would support young people with reading difficulties. This means that all young people have clear information about the home readily available. Placing authorities comment favourably on the high levels of communication they receive from the home, and the high standard of care planning. Internal and external monitoring of the function of the home is rigorous. Monthly visit reports conducted by independent visitors are comprehensive and recommendations made therein are swiftly acted upon. Reviews of the quality of care are conducted in consultation with young people and all stakeholders. Young people have the opportunity to comment on their care at weekly meetings with key workers, their review meetings and in meetings with their placing social workers. There are regular house meetings where the young people are able to discuss day to day living matters. The reviews of the quality of care clearly identify children's achievements or setbacks, and outline areas of necessary service development. The home keeps the regulatory body informed of any matters that need to be notified by regulation and responds quickly to improve areas of service provision that these notifications identify. The home has met all of the requirements and	

recommendations that were made at the previous inspection by the regulatory body.

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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