

SC045096

Registered provider: Blackford Education (Schools) Ltd

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.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2011. She is also registered to manage a second home within the organisation.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

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

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 25 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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25/10/2017	Full	Good
10/05/2016	Full	Outstanding
15/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/09/2015	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
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult with children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7(1)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	26/10/2018
13: The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and	26/10/2018

promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(2)(h))	
14: The care planning standard The care planning standard is that children— (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)) In particular, ensure that care and behaviour management plans and risk assessments are reviewed in order to provide new and temporary staff with clear, concise and current information about how to meet the children's current needs.	26/10/2018

Recommendations

- 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)
- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents and carers should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5). In particular, records maintained by staff should reflect the child's time spent living at the home, their progress and achievements.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

How well staff consult with children and seek their views requires improvement. Children's views about their day-to-day experiences are sought informally every day. However, staff do not formally talk with children about their feelings following incidents

that have resulted in them being held. Children's meetings are frequently refused, and formal key-worker sessions do not take place regularly.

The manager and the core team of staff know the children well, and use their knowledge and experience to meet the children's daily needs. In recent months, the home has been reliant on the use of staff who usually work in other parts of the wider organisation. For one child this has been problematic. The child has expressed concern that she is anxious when she does not know who is working the following day.

Care and behaviour management plans are in place, and are reviewed regularly. Despite these regular reviews, these documents lack critical, up-to-date information about each child's current needs and behaviours. As a result, staff who work temporarily at the home are not provided with sufficient information to enable them to understand the children's current needs. Permanent staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's individual needs.

Children live in a home that is divided into two individual houses. Each home has its own front door with a shared garden. The children from both homes have opportunities to share activities and spend time together. This allows the children to have their own personal space and helps with their social development.

All of the children have lived at the home for several years. They are settled and say that they feel safe and happy. Each child can identify a member of staff who they enjoy spending time with, and who they can talk to if they are worried. Children are looked after by a manager and team who show them genuine warmth and loving care.

Children are supported effectively to maintain relationships with family members. A child's social worker said, 'The manager and team work closely with family members, relationships have improved as a result, staff are very good at sharing pertinent information following each visit.'

Staff encourage children to have healthy lifestyles. Children attend health appointments and they are provided with nutritious meals. Children's special interests and hobbies are promoted. Children have a wide range of leisure experiences, such as holidays abroad, volunteering at charity shops and the St John Ambulance service, playing football and going swimming. 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 attained in this home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children are, in the main, helped and protected effectively. Weaknesses identified at this inspection relate to the manager's oversight and monitoring of incident and restraint reports. Records completed by staff lack clear and concise information about what has happened, why it occurred and what actions they have taken as a result.

Children's behaviour is generally managed well. Staff help and support children when they are distressed and unhappy. However, when incidents do occur, children are not provided with satisfactory guidance to help them to learn from or take responsibility for their behaviour. Targets set do not focus on children's current presenting needs, nor do they maximise children's individual progress.

The manager and the staff team are fully trained in an accredited physical intervention technique. There have been three reported incidents involving one child who has been held to prevent injury to herself and others. Records of these incidents do not show whether the child's views have been explored or considered. As a result, leaders and managers have limited information with which to devise strategies to prevent similar incidents. There have not been any safeguarding referrals, missing-from-home incidents or complaints.

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

Monitoring of the quality of care and records requires improvement. Neither the registered manager nor the independent visitor has identified omissions in the records completed by staff or ensured that the views of children are sought effectively.

Records relating to children's daily experiences and consequences for undesirable behaviour are not well maintained or effectively monitored. Records completed by staff do not comprehensively reflect the child's time spent living at the home, their progress and their achievements.

Staff receive regular supervision and attendance at team meetings has improved. Despite this positive work, the registered manager does not use these formal meetings to ensure that staff reflect on their practice or explore alternative behaviour management approaches.

The staff report that they feel supported and the training opportunities are good. Many of the staff have worked at the home for several years. In the main, children are provided with consistency and continuity of care, and have developed meaningful and loving relationships with individual members of staff.

Two of the three requirements raised at the last inspection in October 2017 have not been met.

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

Inspector

Sharron Escott: social care inspector

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