

# SC047978

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 20 to 21 June 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 **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 2 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people become much safer. Some outstanding safeguarding practice is starting to emerge in the home.

- Young people make excellent progress in learning to manage risks. They are allowed to experience risk, in order to build up their knowledge about how to keep themselves safe.
- The manager is an excellent leader. She is creative, innovative and a very strong advocate for young people. Her assertive approach makes staff and other professionals listen and act. Her management style is bold, while at the same time, caring and supportive. This has a positive impact on young people. She manages the home exceptionally well.
- All young people, whatever their background, either engage well in education or are in a much better position to start their learning again. This is because they have made considerable progress towards addressing their urgent safeguarding needs.
- Young people leave the home with improved confidence and higher aspirations.
- Young people are supported to develop and rebuild relationships with their family. This has led to several success stories, in which young people have moved back to their family home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The staff team's approach is not always as consistent as it could be when young people display self-harming behaviours.
- Young people are not consistently encouraged by staff to do something productive with their day, particularly when they are not in education.
- Improvements to staff training should continue. This will ensure that the team's competency is more easily monitored by the manager.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 02/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 02/11/2016      | Full            | Good                    |
| 22/01/2016      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness  |
| 06/07/2015      | Full            | Requires improvement    |

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

### Recommendations

- Ensure that where children placed at the home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school role for some other reason that in the interim, the child is supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

### Inspection judgements

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

Young people are all making good progress. Some areas of their progress are outstanding. However, the home is not yet outstanding overall.

Young people have access to wide-ranging and exciting leisure opportunities, which they enjoy. When young people do not yet attend education, staff do not always engage effectively with them to ensure a purposeful day. This is especially the case in the mornings, when young people struggle to get up and are not motivated enough. There is a lack of planning and, therefore, opportunities for learning are missed.

Education has a very high priority. Young people are encouraged to look ahead positively and to think about a bright future. This builds their confidence and self-esteem. Their overall well-being is well considered when making education plans. There are times when young people's immediate safety and emotional well-being are prioritised. However, when young people start to come to terms with their situation, they are significantly better placed to learn.

Young people who were previously struggling to engage with specialist health services are now in receipt of the help that they need. For some young people, this is so noteworthy that their life chances massively improve. Young people with mental health issues make excellent progress. One parent spoke about their child's progress saying, 'Nobody thought [the child] would get to this stage, nobody.' Young people readily engage with a range of different professionals and there are particularly strong links with key professionals, such as psychotherapists. Other professionals make good-quality decisions because they are fully briefed by staff with the most up-to-date information.

Key working sessions are instrumental in developing excellent relationships between young people and staff. Young people engage readily. They talk about their difficulties and work through their problems together with staff. Staff help them to find solutions, building up their resilience and confidence. Support from staff helps young people to come to terms with what has happened to them in the past. Young people are well

supported to work towards going back home whenever possible. Some young people are not only enjoying more positive relationships with their families, but are getting ready to move back home. One parent reported, 'If it wasn't for the manager and the team, my child would not be coming home.' Work is so good in this area that the amount of time that young people need to be away from their family is significantly reduced.

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

Young people learn how to manage and reduce risks. This is a very significant strength of the home. Those who have presented with exceptionally high-risk behaviour are able to experience and learn about risk in a controlled environment. This experiential approach helps young people to learn how to protect themselves, now and in the future. To maintain safety, planning is careful and evaluation is thorough. Good-quality risk assessments assist in this process. They are always up to date and provide staff with clear information. A young person said, 'I am definitely better than I was before because they have recently given me more space.'

Effective direct work allows young people to reflect on their progress and difficulties, further embedding their learning about safety. Some staff and young people report that the approach to young people is not always consistent from every member of staff. While this is not a specific shortfall in meeting the quality standards, this is not as helpful as it could be for young people. Some staff are still learning about how best to support young people to reduce high-risk behaviour.

Staff have had training on aspects of safety such as self-harm, around child sexual exploitation, attachment disorders and first aid. They use their learning well in their day-to-day work. The training programme is developing all the time and positively influences safeguarding practice. However, the team's training profile is difficult for the manager to monitor because the records are not up to date. She is currently working on this as she develops the home.

Behaviour management is good. Young people learn about how to develop more socially acceptable behaviour. One staff member reflected on a young person's behaviour saying, 'She is so much more likely to negotiate and compromise.' The young person's social worker was also particularly complimentary about behaviour management. Following any incident, young people are always asked for their opinion about what could have gone better. They are also asked if they have any views on how staff could manage their behaviour better. The behaviour management approach enables young people to be influential in their own development. It promotes their readiness to learn about and develop better behaviour.

When young people go missing, staff do everything that they can to find them. Good joint working with others, such as parents and the police, ensures that all information is shared effectively. This secures the young person's return as soon as possible.

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

The manager has been in her position since January 2017. She is undergoing her fit person's assessment with Ofsted. She is suitably experienced and qualified, and has a number of years' experience. She is currently completing the diploma level 5 in leadership and management, demonstrating her commitment to her own development.

The manager has made an excellent start. She is an innovator and has developed some outstanding practice. She is clear in her expectations of staff and has implemented several changes. These include better risk management systems and improved quality assurance work. The deputy manager adds further quality to the leadership team. Her coaching of less confident staff has been instrumental to team development. Staff described her support as 'massive' and said 'she is amazing'.

The management approach to all aspects of work is one of professional curiosity. Extremely careful analysis and scrutiny of practice enables the manager to be highly effective in improving the ethos of the home and her team's performance. She has mentored staff extremely well through a period of significant change. Young people have made some outstanding progress because of this newly developed approach. One young person's progress has been life changing because of the manager's work in this area. One staff member said, 'She is fantastic. I like what she has done.'

The staff team consists of both experienced and inexperienced staff. It still needs further development to gel, but the manager is fully aware of this. Managers continue to strive to improve staff performance through supervision and direct observation of their work practice.

The manager is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a very clear idea of how she wants the home to develop. Her innovative approach has brought about very positive change. She has influenced the wider organisation's practice in areas such as safeguarding. She is assertive and outspoken. This makes her a good advocate for young people and positively influences other professional's decision making. Young people are empowered by her. They learn that they can and should have their say.

The three recommendations made at the last inspection are met. Staff are now more aware of each young person's educational journey. They also know what young people are good at and where they have struggled in the past. This helps staff to know what support young people need in their learning. When staff from other homes are used, they are now properly briefed in the home's procedures and young people's needs. This ensures that they can work with young people more effectively. Care planning is clearer and young people's needs are now well personalised.

## **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:** SC047978

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Blue Mountain Homes Limited

**Registered provider address:** Flat 17, Leeland Mansions, Leeland Road, London W13 9HE

**Responsible individual:** Pradeep Manaktala

**Registered manager:** Rachel Knutton

## Inspector(s)

Caroline Brailsford: social care inspector

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