

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	08/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC414516
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Blue Mountain Homes Ltd
Registered person address	17 Leeland Mansions, Leeland Road, London, W13 9HB

Responsible individual	Pradeep Manaktala
Registered manager	Douglas Harrison
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford

Inspection date	08/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has declined in effectiveness.	
This home has been judged to have declined in effectiveness because, at the full inspection in November 2015, all young people were progressing well in education; but this is not currently the case. One young person has been at the home for almost 6 weeks and there are no plans in place to ensure that they can access a suitable school placement. There are no personal education plans for staff to refer to. Information from previous schools, such as termly reports, is also unavailable. One young person said, 'they don't know how I did in education before'. Consequently, staff are unaware of the young person's previous achievements or targets. Whilst the young person is receiving some personal tutoring, this is minimal. The manager has not made contact with the local authority virtual head teacher to demonstrate a pro-active approach to this young person's education. Any drift or interruption to learning is of utmost importance because the young person should be embarking on their final exam courses this year. If this is not put right quickly it could affect their future life chances. At the last inspection, there were no shortfalls in the management response to safeguarding issues. Since then, where concerns have been raised about the conduct of a staff member, the manager could not evidence how he had assessed potential risks to young people. However, he did ensure that the matter was referred to the appropriate person in the local authority and to Ofsted. This enabled prompt investigation. Young people's risk assessments are basic and do not cover all of their specific safeguarding issues. For example, risks relating to sexual exploitation and gangs are not evaluated in one young person's risk assessment. There is the potential for important safeguarding information to be missed by staff when deciding on their action to keep a young person safe. Where young people go missing, this is managed well. Staff find out quickly because of a high level of staff supervision. They look for young people and contact the police and other relevant professionals. One young person reflected on	

a period of when he was missing from care and said, 'staff did phone me and persuaded me to come back'. However, where a young person's episodes of missing have led to a multi-agency risk management meeting, the manager is unaware of all the recommendations from the meeting. Therefore, it cannot be ascertained if the recommendations have been effectively carried out.

There have been improvements. The home has met the two requirements and three recommendations set at the last inspection. These improvements have had a positive impact on young people. Missing from care return interviews are now carried out to promote opportunities to further safeguard them. All notifications have been made to Ofsted in accordance with the regulations. Also, there have been improvements to the arrangements for the recording and administration of medicines. Other records, such as the daily log and the restraint log are also better. They enable more effective monitoring of staff practice and conduct.

Other improvements include a new format for young people's meetings, so that they can have more of a say in the running of the home. Young people now all have memory boxes and staff help them to collect memorabilia and photographs of good times. Staff help them to keep mementos of their achievements. When young people transition to a new placement, they take this box with them so that they will be able to reflect positively on their time at the home. One social worker has commented very positively on how a young person was assisted by staff to transition to their new placement. In addition, young people say that they were made to feel very welcome when they arrived at the home.

Young people say they like living at this home and generally feel that this is a place of safety, where they can make good progress. One young person commented on the staff saying 'they are sound'. There are very positive relationships between staff and young people. Staff use their skills well to promote and develop these relationships. They know that if there are good relationships, young people are more likely to accept support with their problems and worries. Support is particularly good in relation to helping young people to recognise and manage their issues of safety. Recently young people have been well supported through complex relationships with others and after their periods of missing from care.

There is strong multi-agency working in some areas. For example, where a young person has been obliged to undertake work with the youth offending team, staff have complimented the case worker's efforts to ensure that the young person engages well and makes progress.

The manager is committed to providing a good level of care. He is well liked by staff and young people. Both he and an independent visitor complete regular monitoring of the home. There are examples where this works effectively and the manager responds quickly to any recommendations made, demonstrating his commitment to improvement.

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and registered to provide care to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/11/2015	Full	Good
24/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/11/2014	Full	Good

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
8. The education standard In order to meet the education standard, the registered person must: (1) Ensure that children make measurable progress towards achieving their education potential and are helped to do so.	31 March 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to understand each child's education and training targets or next steps for learning. If a child's progress is not in line with their agreed targets or next steps, staff should seek expert advice from education professionals, such as the Virtual Head, SENCO, learning mentor or teacher. Staff must challenge the child's education provider if the child does not receive sufficient support to progress as outlined in their relevant plans. (The Guide to the Children's Homes Quality Standards, page 28, paragraph 5.11)
- ensure that where there has been a review after a child has become missing from placement, the review should result in the development of a strategy to minimise a repeat of the missing episode. This in particular relation to ensuring that recommendations stemming from the review are made understood by staff and managers. (Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, page 20, paragraph 55)
- ensure that the recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. (The Guide to the Children's Homes Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any

signs that might indicate that a child is in any way at risk of harm. This is in particular relation to young people's risk assessments. (The Guide to the Children's Homes Quality Standards, page 43, paragraph 9.12)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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