

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	17 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC490364
Type of inspection	Full
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	Donna King
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford

Inspection date	17 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC490364

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make good progress with their education, and some have started learning again after a period of not attending any education.
- Young people like staff and regularly accept help from them. This allows them to be well supported and to make progress in a number of areas, including their safety.
- Staff 'go the extra mile' for young people, including coming to the home during their time off when young people need support from them.
- Staff manage young people's behaviour well and young people quickly learn about how they can make positive changes.
- Young people are well respected by staff, who speak highly of them. This develops their self-confidence.
- The home is well managed by a registered manager, supported by an effective deputy manager.
- There is very effective joint working with other professionals. This complements young people's good progress.
- There are shortfalls, but the impact on young people to date is minimal and does not detract from the good outcomes and quality of care. Shortfalls include the checking of fire doors, as some were found by the inspector to be faulty. There was a shortfall found in the management of staff training and in the quality of risk assessment documentation.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, in relation to fire doors, the registered person must ensure— 12(2)(d) 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 their health;	20 June 2016
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, in relation to staff training the registered person must— 13(2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	20 June 2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and registered to care for and accommodate four young people, and is privately owned.

Recent inspection history.

This is the first inspection following registration of this home.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
This is the home's first inspection since it was registered by Ofsted in October 2015. Young people make good progress. They enjoy positive relationships with staff. This enables them to develop a level of trust, so that they can talk openly about their problems and worries. Young people have accepted help in a number of areas, particularly in relation to their safety and their health. They share personal information about their safety, emotional well-being and health with staff, who then pinpoint the right advice and outside help, resulting in progress. Regular and positive joint working with other agencies also ensures a high level of support. Care plans capture young people's differing needs from the outset, and priorities for progress are well considered. Young people have made good progress with their attainment and engagement in education. Some have engaged in education for the first time after a period of non-attendance. When discussing young people's progress, one staff member said they took most pride in the fact that a young person 'had not had education for years and we got her into education'. Staff break down barriers to learning and develop very good links with schools. They keep educational drift to an absolute minimum and, despite some young people being in crisis on their admission, they soon have a tailor-made educational package. Targets are realistic and based on a number of factors, including emotional well-being and behaviour as well as educational attainment in the past. This maximises achievement, because young people are expected to learn at a pace that is right for them, preventing early placement breakdown. Staffing levels allow young people to develop their independence skills appropriately for their future, such as using public transport, banking and budgeting. Where young people leave the home, this is for the right reasons, for example where there are safety issues between young people. Young people are moved only if this is absolutely necessary. Staff go out of their way to support young people with their transition. There is a recent example of a staff member coming into work in their own time to support a young person's placement ending.	

Care is taken to ensure that young people collect good memories, which are clearly recorded in a memory book. A memory box also ensures that memorabilia and key items are kept. Young people will be able to reflect on their time at the home and make sense of what happened to them later in life.

New young people are admitted only after carefully matching their needs against the existing group of young people and the home's statement of purpose. Managers know that they are responsible for ensuring that they accept new admissions only if they are suitable. This means that young people start to make progress from an early stage. One young person told the inspector that their admission was managed well and that they liked the home from the point of admission, despite being nervous before they came. Another said that they were 'welcomed' and had a 'good feeling' about the home on their admission.

Young people know that they can make a suggestion or a complaint, and feel that the manager and staff listen to them. They always get to find out the outcome and any decisions made as a result of their complaints. Young people's views are central to their care, and staff work hard to ensure that they encourage participation in their meetings and reviews of care. Young people confirm that they are listened to and that they have their say. They learn how to put their views forward in the future, developing their confidence.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people have been missing from this home. When one young person's 'missing' behaviour was particularly embedded, staff did everything they could to break down the unsafe behaviour. The young person said that they felt safer at the time, and other professionals praised staff's work in this area. Each time there is an episode of missing, staff follow their own and local area procedures, working well with other professionals and the police to protect young people as far as possible. Comments from the police include, 'they work closely with us' and 'they are proactive'. Social workers also commented very positively, saying 'staff go over and above to make sure she is safe'. This shows that young people are as protected as they can be, despite their 'missing' behaviours.	

After every 'missing' episode there is a return interview, completed by an independent person, and strategy meetings are appropriately held. Young people are safer as a result of being in this home. This is because, despite some young people not sharing much detail at their return interview, they do share comprehensive information with staff about where they have been and their activities. This enables staff to point out risks clearly to them, and allows the relevant support to be sought to ensure good progress.

There is a very positive approach to challenging behaviours. Some young people's behaviour is very challenging, with damage to property, threatening behaviour and assaults on staff. Staff always see young people in a positive light, so that young people feel supported and respected. This positive approach allows for them to reflect with staff on their behaviour. Staff ensure that young people are clear about expectations for behaviour and, as a result, their social interactions improve. One young person reflected on their progress and said 'they are making me realise, they are brilliant'.

Young people are protected by staff who know them well. Their risk assessments are individual and allow them to take proportionate, age-appropriate risks. The detail in the risk assessments does not always match up with the high level of specific information available. For example, in one young person's risk assessment it is set out that they should be monitored with their drug and alcohol risks, but did not say how. In addition, risks regarding the Internet and radicalisation are not fully covered, despite staff keeping young people safe and supervising them well.

The house is a safe place for young people to live. Checks on staff to make sure that they are suitable take place, reducing the risk of unsuitable adults working in the home. There are regular checks on health and safety equipment, and there are regular fire drills. All who use the building know what to do should there be a fire. On the day of the inspection, several fire doors were found not to be closing properly. While the fire door closure mechanisms had been checked, it was not clear whether recent checks had included whether or not the doors closed properly. The doors were mended during the inspection, but the lack of robust checking could put young people and staff at risk.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager is suitably qualified. She holds the diploma level 5 in management. Staff and young people report that she manages the home well. One young person said that, after the manager had been off work recently, she 'literally ran up to her to hug her when she came back', speaking highly of her and her management. The manager has continued to make improvements since the home was registered in October 2015. This demonstrates her commitment, capability and leadership. Improvements include a new staff appraisal system, and changes to her quality assurance systems to ensure that specific information is regularly gathered from professionals and young people about the quality of care. The manager is very well supported by an effective deputy manager. Together, they have very good oversight of the young people's needs. Leaders' dedication to multi-agency working helps young people to make good progress. One professional commented on this, saying that communication with them was 'really good'. The home's statement of purpose is regularly updated to make sure that it clearly sets out the aims of the home. Monitoring has ensured that young people actually receive the service as set out in the document, for example ensuring that 'staff have a sensitive approach to healthcare' and that they are 'highly supportive and encouraging when it comes to young people's education'. Robust monthly monitoring from an independent person scrutinises the quality of care, often making recommendations for further improvements. The manager responds quickly and effectively to these recommendations, and there is continued improvement because of these visits. This assists in driving forward further development and shows that the progress in the home does not stand still. The staff team is relatively new and still growing experience, with several new staff joining the team recently. They report an effective induction prior to them actually working with young people, so they are familiar with young people's needs, and the policies and procedures. There is a good balance of expertise on each shift and always a more experienced member of staff on duty. One professional said, 'staff seem committed, nurturing and caring'. In addition, a young person said, 'they are brilliant'.	

Not all staff have received their training in the particular skills that they need to look after this complex group of young people. Some have not had training against child sexual exploitation (CSE), or drugs and alcohol awareness, or specialist self-harm training. However, there is always staff member on duty who is trained in the relevant areas, reducing the risk to young people. Managers do not have an up-to-date current list of staff training, and the information was therefore difficult to establish. Managers do not have a clear picture of their staff's training profile to ensure competence on individual shifts in the future. There is the potential for staff training to drift and shortfalls to go unnoticed, if this is not put right.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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