

Children's homes — Interim inspection

Inspection date	30/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC490364
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Blue Mountain Homes Ltd
Registered provider address	Flat 17, Leeland Mansions, Leeland Road, London W13 9HE

Responsible individual	Pradeep Manaktala
Registered manager	Donna King
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford

Inspection date	30/01/2017
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 judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people continue to receive high-quality care that promotes their safety and welfare. Young people feel well cared for and have some particularly good relationships with staff. They spend very regular quality time with their key worker to explore their issues. This helps them to understand and come to terms with their situation. Safety is always a top priority. Staff are instrumental in teaching young people about how to protect themselves. A social work team manager was particularly happy with one young person's progress and said, 'the home is wonderful'. Several young people have left the home since the last inspection. This is a reflection of the very complex needs of young people admitted to the home. Although there has been a high level of incidents, these are consistently managed well. There are times when young people put themselves at risk. However, they learn how to look after themselves and each other. They are supported to learn from their mistakes and become safer than they were before. One professional told the inspector that one young person was assessed as high risk of child sexual exploitation when they came to the home, but now has 'no risk at all'. The manager is well aware of her responsibilities in keeping everyone safe. She only makes decisions to serve notice on placements if young people's behaviour is so disruptive that they are putting themselves and others at risk. However, this is a last resort and staff do not give up on young people easily. The tenacity and commitment of the manager enables young people to gain stability and develop trust in those who care for them. Despite periods of difficult behaviour, young people know that they are cared for and develop a sense of belonging. Young people are only admitted after a thorough assessment of their needs. Their behavioural profile is carefully considered against that of the other young people. One social worker spoke very positively about a young person's admission and was pleased that staff had supported the young person well. They spoke of a 'good planning meeting' and 'good quality care' during the transition. The home prepares young people well for leaving the home. The registered manager has developed a new recording system, which evidences particularly well the high level of support in this area. Several young people have moved on	

successfully with the support of staff.

The manager remains highly committed to young people. She leads a team of energetic, enthusiastic and caring staff. They are creative in finding solutions to difficult issues, so that young people can make good progress. When the manager feels that other agencies are not moving fast enough and are hindering a young person's progress, she will actively challenge this. For example, one young person was recently refused admission to the local school and given an educational placement elsewhere. The manager was adamant that the young person should be able to go to the local school, which had a much more positive Ofsted rating. She appealed the decision swiftly, effectively and with a good result for the young person. The manager said, 'it is wonderful that they have got into the school and they are already doing well'. This young person is now attaining well for the first time in several months, which is very significant progress for them.

The two requirements from the last inspection have been met. There have been improvements to staff training and to the arrangements for fire protection. The recommendation from the last inspection about managing risk has also been met. The manager knows the strengths of the home and builds on both to continually improve the service. The organisation arranges for an independent visitor to inspect the home once a month. Scrutiny of the quality of care is strong. The management team and staff are open to further improvement. They always put right anything that is identified for improvement.

There are some improvements needed to the quality of recording, particularly discussions with young people after incidents and restraints, which are not consistently recorded. Where young people have been missing, they do not always receive an independent return interview. While this is the responsibility of the local authority, these have not all been chased up by the manager when they have not taken place. There are also occasions when a record is not made of discussions with young people about where they have been. Some records relating to a young person's move to another home within the organisation have been mislaid. It would be difficult to complete monitoring or investigation in the future if this is not put right.

Despite some improvements needed, young people experience care that is very positive for them, helps them to develop a sense of safety, and enables them to prepare for the next stage in their life. The improvements needed do not detract from young people's positive experience of being in the home.

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful clear and objective recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, point 14.4)
- Ensure that, when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take into account information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, point 9.30)

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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