

2500044

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to two children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

The home is led by an experienced registered manager.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 17 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive excellent care in a very comfortable, family like environment. The manager and staff maintain the home to a very high standard. This is because they take pride in the home and want children to be comfortable and happy.

Children feel relaxed and part of a family soon after moving into this home. They are shown considerable love and care from a nurturing staff team. Staff often work above and beyond their roles to meet children's needs. As a result, children live at the home for long periods and make very good progress. When children leave the home, they are equipped with the skills for independent living. They keep in touch with the manager and staff to share their news and achievements. This shows that children feel they are an intrinsic part of the home. They feel valued and cherished by the manager and staff.

Children develop strong and affectionate bonds with the manager and staff. Together, they work through any problems or worries. Children receive excellent support from staff during difficult times in their lives. This means that they become resilient and not easily overwhelmed by their feelings. Both children report that they can now manage their anger in a variety of contexts because of the support they have received. One child said that she is proud of her achievements.

The manager and staff have undertaken commendable work to strengthen relationships between children and their families. For example, a child has progressed from seeing his family six times per year to having weekly unsupervised overnight stays. Last year, he spent Christmas with his family for the first time in 10 years. This is exceptional progress from when he moved into the home.

Children are in full-time education. They are working towards attaining qualifications and making very good progress. This is a particular achievement as both children were not in any form of education prior to moving to the home. They sometimes struggle with attendance. However, the manager and staff use their skills and experience to ensure that children maintain their motivation to learn. This means that children aspire to study, gain employment and achieve their full potential.

Children are fully included in their care planning. The staff support children to attend the relevant meetings. Children feel empowered to be part of the decisions made about their lives. The staff write children's care plans in a sensitive and child-friendly manner. These plans are accessible to children and indeed children contribute to their plans. Again, this demonstrates that children are confident, empowered and steering their own lives.

Children are in very good health. They enjoy an excellent range of activities. These are documented in evocative memory books which reinforce the child's achievements and experiences.

The manager and staff have commendable relationships with external agencies. External professionals describe communication and information-sharing with the home as 'brilliant'. External professionals attribute children's progress to the high standard of care provided. One social worker described a child as going 'from strength to strength'. Another said, 'I could not ask for anything more from the manager and staff.'

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

The manager and staff ensure children's safety. They understand the risks posed to and from children. Individual risk assessments are clearly written. They include up-to-date and pertinent information which is kept under constant review. Effective multi-agency working arrangements mean that the manager and staff are alerted to new information or concerns. This allows them to take swift action to safeguard children effectively. For example, there have been specific concerns about one child. The manager and staff are working with involved professionals and family members to ensure his safety.

Children receive consistent behavioural boundaries that are implemented by staff. As a result, few incidents and situations rarely escalate. Where there have been incidents, children receive the support they need to talk about their feelings. The staff undertake restorative work with children to make sure that relationships remain strong. This work also helps children to understand the impact of their behaviour on others. This helps them to develop empathy and compassion for others.

Children do not go missing from the home or leave without the agreement of staff. Staff know where the children are, especially if they are out with friends and family. The manager and staff have robust contingency plans should a child go missing from care. The staff have had training and development in this area. They are vigilant because they understand the risks to children from going missing from care.

Prospective new staff are recruited in accordance with safer recruitment protocols. The manager exercises caution in recruitment because she wants the children to be cared for by safe and committed adults.

Staffing ratios are very good. This means that if children need reassurance at any time, there is always someone available. Consequently, children feel safe, secure and able to turn to trusted familiar adults for care and support.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A committed and well-established manager leads this home. She provides excellent leadership. Her levels of resilience and dedication are exceptional. The manager leads by example and expects the highest standards from staff. There is a strong

child-centred ethos and culture which unifies staff practice. This has ensured that the quality of children's lives has improved. Children and staff flourish under her leadership.

The staff respond well to the manager's leadership style. They have respect for the manager and confidence in her decision-making. The manager offers a nurturing approach and clear direction in her decision-making. She coaches and mentors the staff in their daily care practice. This approach helps the staff to grow in confidence and develop their experience. As a result, the staff work as a team to manage the home seamlessly when the manager is away.

New staff receive robust inductions. There is regular training, which is specific to the needs of children. Professional supervision takes place regularly and is of very good quality. Professional supervision sessions focus on the needs of children and staff's welfare. Leaders and managers implement plans to support staff if they experience difficulties or personal issues. Staff say that the manager is always there for them. They know they can rely on her and so have developed trust and confidence in her.

The manager is diligent in her oversight of the home. She undertakes regular audits and reviews records. This helps to assure her they are of the highest standard. Quality assurance processes, through the independent visitor reports and feedback from other agencies, inform the home's development plan. This helps the manager to maintain excellent insight into the progress that children make.

The manager is forward-thinking in her practice. This is reflected in children's records, which contain clear plans for their futures. This creates stability for children as they know what is happening in their lives. The manager is a strong champion for children. She advocates to ensure that they receive the best possible service from other agencies.

The manager is committed to maintaining high standards of care. She seeks feedback from internal and external colleagues. The feedback frequently commends the manager and staff for their commitment to children. They have high levels of confidence in the manager and the home.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 2500044

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Limited

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

Responsible individual: Pradeep Manaktala

Registered manager: Marianne Marlow

Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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