

2568557

Registered provider: Blue Elephant Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider and registered to provide care for three children who may have social and emotional needs. At the time of inspection, two children were living in the home and spoken to by the inspector.

The post of registered manager is vacant. The inspection was supported by the responsible individual and an interim manager from within the organisation, who is providing managerial support within the home.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 June 2026

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 9 March 2026

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: During the full inspection on 9 and 10 March 2026, Ofsted judged the home to be inadequate. There were significant concerns about the safety of children. A requirement was issued requiring the provider to address the concerns. A monitoring visit completed on 1 April 2026 found that the provider was taking steps to improve the service.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/03/2026	Full	Inadequate
20/08/2024	Full	Good
23/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/08/2022	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children are making progress in most areas. However, there have been shortfalls in leadership and management which have caused instability in the staff team. This has impacted negatively on the overall experience and progress of children. A serious incident involving a member of staff has had a significant impact on staff and children.

Leaders and managers have acknowledged the shortfalls and have started taking action to address concerns.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children in this home are making progress although not enough is being done to ensure that each child's needs are fully met. One child moved in at short notice without leaders taking full account of their individual needs and how to meet these. Staff have worked hard to support the child's move into the home, and the child has begun to build trusting relationships with them.

Staff have not always ensured that screen time for children is in line with healthy routines and more could be done by staff to ensure that healthy routines, including sleep, are consistent.

Staff understand the children's communications needs and take time to encourage the children to safely share how they feel. Staff have regular and meaningful conversations with children about a range of sensitive issues, and this helps children to better understand their feelings and emotions.

Children are fully involved in decision-making and can express their views in a range of ways. One child's move out of the home was carefully planned and supported by a trusted member of staff. Staff take time to understand children's views and explore a range of alternatives when children's requests are not possible. Staff value each child's individual identity and encourage the children to explore their own hobbies and interests. Staff's non-judgemental and accepting approach has supported the children to make progress in their self-confidence.

Children's physical and emotional health needs are met, and staff ensure that children are supported to attend all their appointments. Staff understand the value of education and support children to attend regularly. Leaders and managers have advocated for one child to have an adaptation to their timetable to meet their needs and to support regular attendance.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

A serious incident involving a member of staff has impacted on the stability of the staff team and consistency of care for children. Leaders and managers took appropriate action to safeguard children from harm but the impact on children is not yet fully understood. Learning from this incident to ensure that it is not repeated is ongoing and therefore changes are not fully embedded.

Staff are attuned to subtle changes in children's behaviours. Staff have a good understanding of each child's emotions and can act quickly when children become distressed. This means that there are few incidents of concern.

Staff take an age-appropriate approach to managing children's safety online. Monitoring systems are in place to enable staff to see what children are viewing online. Staff also engage children in open conversations about how to keep themselves safe. Bespoke training has been put in place to target emerging areas of risk to ensure that staff hold the necessary skills to keep children safe.

There has been one minor medication error, which is being investigated by the provider. Medication is stored safely and there is an accurate record of administration.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Instability in management and unplanned changes in the staff team have had a detrimental impact on staff morale, and staff report that this has also had an impact on their practice with the children. Leaders and managers have taken action to stabilise the staff team by filling vacancies with suitably qualified and experienced staff, though these changes are yet to be fully embedded.

Feedback from staff is mixed. While staff are feeling encouraged by recent changes made by leaders and managers, they have not always felt able to discuss concerns. As part of wider learning, leaders and managers have taken action to ensure that staff feel able to openly discuss their concerns, but these changes will take time to embed to improve practice.

Most children have up-to-date plans which help staff to understand how to meet their needs. However, the plan for one child to return home is unclear, and this has resulted in uncertainty for the child and their family.

The children's bedrooms are decorated to a high standard and personalised to their individual preferences. However, the overall home environment, including outside space, needs some attention to improve the appearance and to ensure it is welcoming and fully useable for the children. Leaders and managers have an agreed plan of renovations for the home, and work has commenced.

Supervision between staff and the manager takes place regularly, is comprehensive and used to support staff's welfare and to reflect on practice. Team meetings are held regularly and there is a strong focus on team cohesion and reflection on practice. Staff benefit from specialist supervision from clinical staff to further enhance their practice and learning.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(f)(h)) In particular the registered person must ensure that a suitably qualified and skilled manager is appointed. In addition, the registered person must ensure that staff are appropriately supported to care for the children and any concerns within the staff team are effectively managed.	28 August 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person must challenge (under regulation 5(c)) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56., paragraphs 11.4 and 11.5)

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: 2568557

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Elephant Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 30, Chivenor Business Park, Barnstaple, Devon
EX31 4AY

Responsible individual: Emma Lyall

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Stacey Pellow, Social Care Inspector

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