

2588370

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to three children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

A monitoring visit was undertaken to the setting on 2 December 2020. The report can be found on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy and benefit from positive relationships with the staff who care for them. Additionally, the staff work in partnership with relevant professionals. This ensures that there is a shared approach to the care children receive. This means children can access the services they need to help them make progress.

Children say they are cared for well. They are supported with their health and education. When children are older, staff support and encourage them to become more independent. For example, one child does their own shopping and laundry. This means that when children leave the home, they will have developed important skills for independence.

Children are helped to express their views, wishes and feelings through individual key-work meetings with staff. They are involved in activity planning on a weekly basis. These opportunities give children a sense of shared responsibility. However, feedback from children is not always acted on by managers and staff. Staff support children to spend time with their families, in accordance with their plans. This provides children with the opportunity to maintain these important relationships, which are often lifelong.

Staff ensure that children can access a wide range of activities in the community. This means children's interests are encouraged, leading to greater self-esteem and confidence.

Children's attendance and commitment to education is good. When children move to this home, they continue at their existing school, whenever possible. This means children benefit from consistency in education, helping them to settle quickly in the home and make educational progress. When children receive education at the home, staff work hard to motivate them to learn. As children become older, staff support them to apply for apprenticeships and to attend interviews.

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

Managers have not ensured that appropriate action is taken when there is a safeguarding concern. When allegations are made by children, they are not shared with the appropriate safeguarding agencies. Managers have not undertaken a thorough investigation, in accordance with procedure. This is a missed opportunity to improve safeguarding practice.

Following incidents of physical intervention, children are given the opportunity to discuss the incident with a member of staff. However, these conversations are not always supportive or nurturing. Some recording implies an unhelpful approach being applied by staff.

There has recently been a fire at the home. This required an evacuation and swift action was taken to ensure everyone's safety. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that all fire safety practices have been reviewed. For example, visitors are not informed of what to do in the event of a fire. Fire tests are not in line with the company's procedures. New children have not been involved in fire evacuation drills. Children's personal evacuation plans have not been reviewed. This means that all risks associated with fire safety have not been reduced.

When children come to live at this home, they receive a welcome booklet. However, this lacks some important information, such as external contact details for advice or help, or how to make a complaint if children are unhappy about any aspect of their care.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post since November 2020. He has a good development plan for the home. He has started acting on this plan and made changes, including a more stable staff team. The manager has become well respected by the staff and other professionals alike. He is in the process of becoming registered with Ofsted.

The staff are motivated and passionate about their work. Staff report that they are well supported by the manager. They work well as a team. The professional supervision of staff takes place regularly and staff are always asked about their well-being. Staff value the oversight and support of the manager.

The manager has ensured that children have a positive experience when moving to the home. One social worker said, 'Positive interactions of the team helped [name of child] to feel comfortable.' This means that children settle quickly into their new environment.

Staff are provided with regular mandatory training. They also receive bespoke training based on the specific care needs of the children. Managers also ensure that staff benefit from advice and guidance from specialist agencies when required.

The manager is developing his systems to monitor the effectiveness of the care provided. However, this requires further strengthening in some areas. This includes ensuring that there is good recording practice, that appropriate key-work sessions are held with children and that robust fire safety procedures are in operation.

Two requirements and four recommendations were made at the last monitoring visit to this setting. These have been met. At this inspection, two requirements and three recommendations have been made in response to identified shortfalls.

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, 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(b)(e)) This is in relation to fire safety checks not being sufficiently robust following a recent fire at the home. Additionally, that safeguarding concerns are not being shared with appropriate agencies following allegations.	24 November 2021
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This is specifically in relation to managers having monitoring systems that identify any concerns in care practices at the home.	24 November 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home produces a children's guide. The children's guide must be available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency) and must be age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)
- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Regulation 39 sets out the requirements on the registered person to have a complaints procedure. Children must be aware of this procedure and be reminded of it as necessary. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.13)

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: 2588370

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Pradeep Manaktala

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector
Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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