

2682000

Registered provider: Blue Elephant Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home was registered in May 2022 and provides care for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is owned and managed by a private locally based organisation that operates several other homes in the area.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 July 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 9 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is a calm and inviting space. Rooms and nooks are well used and attractively decorated and furnished. The garage is used as an indoor gym area for children. There are pictures of the children in some areas and the current manager has plans to add more in the hallways. Children's bedrooms are well furnished and generally well kept. Outside spaces are maintained.

Children like living in the home. They name carers who they can talk to and say that they feel listened to and they feel safe. The inspector spoke to one parent who stated that they are wholly happy with the care that their child receives. Professionals report that they feel welcome in the home, and that carers build positive relationships with them and maintain good levels of communication.

Carers support children to make progress. They monitor progress and support and encourage children to develop independence skills. When carers are concerned that external professionals are not meeting the children's needs, this is addressed and there is appropriate challenge. Carers involve children when setting targets, however, children are not involved in the review of those targets.

Carers know the children well. They build positive and trusting relationships with children. Carers support children to have new and fun experiences, which are documented in bright and informative memory books.

Sensitive matters are dealt with in a calm and focused manner. Children are actively encouraged to express their thoughts, wishes and feelings; the inspector observed children doing this on several occasions during the inspection. At times, carers have missed opportunities to have meaningful conversations with children.

Carers support children to engage with education. They advocate for children to receive additional tutoring hours. The company has agreed to privately fund an additional day of educational activities for one child. Carers are working with education professionals to complete planning for two children to return to school. However, when children are not receiving the required hours of education, they are provided with little structure and the provision of educational activities is limited.

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

Plans designed to support carers to care for children are clear and informative. Where there is risk, it is appropriately assessed, with the aim of protecting the child. However, some risk assessments document risks that are not present for children. This may confuse carers and could lead to a child being incorrectly labelled. At times, these assessments place responsibility on the child to manage risk and address concerns; this has not been agreed with the child.

Incidents in the home are rare. Learning taken from a serious incident has had a positive impact on practice. Carers intervene earlier and spend more time talking to children and, when required, appropriately monitoring them. They apply relevant training and seek guidance from managers and the in-house psychologists.

Children are provided with consistent boundaries. Carers talk to children, allowing them to know what boundaries are in place and why. When it is appropriate to do so, carers seek children's views when setting new boundaries. This is likely to make children feel respected and listened to.

Carers identify and commission additional services to work with children. When children are reluctant to engage, carers continue to promote the service in a positive manner. Carers have focused conversations with children, with the aim of providing the support they require.

Carers support children in relation to their overall health needs. Children are supported to attend appointments and nurturing when a child is worried or is distressed about attending. One child has been reluctant to allow carers to attend their appointments. Carers have respected their right to privacy but continued to be curious and show concern. This has led to the child being able to share some information with carers.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is currently being run by an acting manager while the manager is taking a period of leave. The acting manager has submitted an application to be registered with Ofsted. This temporary change of manager has not impacted negatively on the home. Carers are incredibly positive about the acting manager. They report that she is proactive and puts in boundaries when needed. The acting manager has quickly formed positive relationships with the children, who seek her out for advice and support.

Management oversight of the home is good. Gaps in knowledge and practice are quickly identified and acted on. However, managers do not always provide carers with debriefs following incidents. When they are completed, they are reflective and thorough. Managers usually speak with children, but if no debrief takes place the reasoning for this is not recorded. The debrief documents are not linked to the incident log or referred to on the case management system. This makes them difficult to find and hard for the reader to gain a full view of management actions and outcomes.

Leaders and managers provide carers with regular good-quality reflective supervision. There is a clear focus on the children and how carers are meeting their needs, as well as the well-being and development of carers. Carers report that supervision is beneficial. Actions are clearly recorded and revisited to confirm that they have been completed.

Carers respect managers and leaders. Carers report that they receive a good level of management support on a day-to-day basis. They say that they enjoy their jobs and have positive relationships with their co-workers. One carer likened the home to 'a well-oiled machine'.

Carers receive training relevant to their role. They are positive about the standard of learning they are provided with and can describe how they have used their learning in practice with children.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings. (Regulation 7 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that conversations with children are meaningful and that opportunities to support children to talk about current or past experiences are not missed.	5 September 2023
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(v))	5 September 2023

In particular, ensure that children who do not attend the required learning are provided with informal educational activities.	
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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)) In particular, ensure that risk assessments are up to date and contain the correct information. Ensure that risks are present and relevant to the child. In addition, ensure that if responsibility for managing risk is placed on a child, that the child is capable of carrying out the assigned action and has agreed to do so, marking this clearly on the plan.	5 September 2023
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—	5 September 2023

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;

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;

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(g)(i)(ii))

In particular, ensure that carers and children are provided with debriefs following incidents. If a debrief is considered by managers to be inappropriate or not required, the reasoning for this should be clearly recorded.

In addition, records of debriefs should be identifiable and accessible.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that, when appropriate, children are involved in setting their targets. They should, when appropriate, involve children in the review of their targets, allowing children to celebrate achievements and/or be motivated to progress. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)

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: 2682000

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Elephant Childcare Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Lucy Squire

Acting manager: Alex Williams

Inspector

Carla Simkiss, Social Care Inspector

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