

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 registered in May 2022 and provides care for up to four children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties. It is owned and managed by a local private organisation that operates several other homes in the area.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

Since the last inspection, the manager has registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 September 2024

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	requires improvement to be 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: 4 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/07/2023	Full	Good
09/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from a large home that provides ample space for them to play and engage in activities. Their bedrooms are personalised and provide safe spaces for their personal effects. The home has three cats, and one child has their own pet snake. This is a well lived-in home that requires a refresh throughout. Improvements to the home, such as a sensory room and repairs to a bathroom, are not complete.

Outcomes for most children who have lived or live in the home are positive. Carers have developed safe and trusting relationships with children. This has allowed them to support children to develop essential independence skills, including securing employment, cooking, budgeting and travelling independently. Children receive good-quality advice and support by actively seeking out carers. This has led to children making safe and considered decisions. When required, carers respectfully challenge other professionals, putting the children and their needs at the heart of their practice.

Despite efforts from carers to support a child who previously lived in the home, they made limited progress. Learning stemming from this has been extensive.

Carers work with children and other professionals to identify the right learning opportunities for children. When children do not attend a formal education provision, carers consistently encourage children to engage in tutoring sessions and informal learning opportunities. Carers communicate with education professionals to ensure that children's needs are met. To meet one child's needs, carers remain on site at their school to provide any support that is required. Without this, the child would not be able to attend.

Carers understand the importance of meeting children's health needs. They take children to appointments and listen to children's views. There is a clear focus on a healthy lifestyle in the home. Children have gym memberships, partake in outdoor activities and are encouraged to eat healthily. Carers work with external professionals to address children's mental health needs. Children benefit from regular sessions with the in-house therapist.

Carers understand the importance of family relationships. However, they recognise that these are not always positive for children. Safety measures designed to reduce risk are implemented for the benefit of the children. Three parents said that they have positive relationships with the staff at the home. They also said that their children receive good-quality care. One parent said that their child 'has loads of people who love him... he has a really good life'.

Preparing children for their future is a focus in the home. Carers have regular and realistic conversations with children about education, careers, where children may live

and the skills that they will need. However, formal planning that considers children's timescales, aims and targets has not been carried out.

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

Children said that they feel safe and like living in the home. They want to spend time with carers, and they value the care and support that they receive. Children feel listened to and are assured that their views matter, particularly in relation to decisions that will affect them, such as children moving into the home. Children are supported to build positive relationships with each other. This is done through joint activities and celebrations. Children speak positively about their peers and carers.

Carers have a good knowledge and understanding of risk. They know the risks that children face and work with children to reduce them. Carers talk openly and honestly to children about their concerns and support children to reflect on their actions and the impact of them. They are committed to keeping children safe. Carers do not always review essential documents about children following time off. This may mean that they do not have important information required to keep children safe.

There have been some serious incidents in the home. During these, carers have maintained boundaries with children and made them aware of the consequences of their actions. However, carers do not always intervene to provide children with the support and safety that they require to de-escalate incidents. On three occasions carers have not prioritised the safety and well-being of a child, choosing to leave them on their own. This led to incidents escalating further, exposing all children in the home to prolonged incidents.

Children and carers are spoken to after incidents. This provides them with the opportunity to reflect and learn from their own actions and the actions of others.

Restraint is used appropriately and as a last resort. Carers have restrained a small child who lives in the home. However, they have not been provided with training on how to restrain younger or smaller children safely. This increases the possibility that the child could get injured during a restraint technique that is designed to keep them safe.

When children go missing, carers react quickly and follow protocols. They contact and work with emergency services to find children and, if necessary, get children the advice and support that they need. Carers work with other professionals to develop safety planning with the aim of reducing missing-from-care incidents.

Carers are proactive in supporting children to follow their likes and interests. They understand that these activities can be essential in providing children with positive relationships and pastimes. Children's day-to-day lives are documented in informative logs and recordings. At times, the language used is not appropriate. This could cause upset if the child were to access their records. Bright and attractive memory books and videos are created to provide children with forever memories.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is passionate about the home and the children who live there. She is visible in the home and has developed positive relationships with children and carers. She talks about children with warmth and familiarity. Decision-making about children is collaborative and focused on their needs.

Management oversight is clearly recorded throughout children's files. This is usually reflective and considers the quality of care provided to children. Research is used to consider children's needs and behaviours. Managers carry out regular reviews of practice. These reviews identify good practice as well as learning points. Concerns about carers' practice are thoroughly investigated. When necessary, information is appropriately shared with other professionals to ensure that the right outcomes are achieved.

Carers like working in the home. They said that they receive good-quality support from leaders and managers and that supervision meets their needs. Records relating to supervision are informative and detailed. Team meetings are held regularly and are inclusive. In-depth and reflective discussions, which can include the psychologist, centre around the children who live in the home. Conversations between managers and carers are honest, open and reflective. The achievements of carers are celebrated, and concerns in relation to practice, development, the working environment or the children are thoroughly discussed.

Planning for how children's needs will be met does not always take place. Documents that contain information about children set out limited non-specific aims and goals. However, they do not set out what carers need to do to support children or how and when these goals will be reviewed. Monthly reviews provide an overview of children's achievements and progress.

Planning for children to move into the home is not always robust. Information about children is gathered and work is carried out to form relationships before children move in. However, there is a lack of consideration of children's individual needs and how these may impact on other children who live in the home. Fortunately, there is no evidence that this has had a negative impact on children.

Most carers' training is not up to date. Leaders and managers monitor training through supervision and team meetings. They have implemented planning to address their concerns. Training essential for carers to meet children's needs has been identified and booked.

Recruitment practice ensures that checks necessary to determine whether carers are safe to work with children are carried out.

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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that each child has a clear plan with specific targets. This should provide carers with a guide in relation to the day-to-day work that they carry out with children. There should be set mechanisms and timescales for review of these plans. In addition, the registered person must ensure that planning for children to move into the home considers the needs of, and impact on, any children who already live there.	23 November 2024

In addition, the registered person must ensure that carers receive the necessary training to meet children's needs.	
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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that effective action is taken to support children and minimise risk during incidents. In addition, the registered person must ensure that on their return from time off, carers review information about children to ensure that they have up-to-date information before working with them.	23 November 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home provides a homely environment for children to live in. All appliances in the home should be in good working order. All areas of the home should be kept in a good state of decoration. When adaptations necessary to meet the needs of children have been identified, these should be completed without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- The registered person should ensure that carers understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in

a way that will be helpful to the child. In particular, carefully consider the appropriateness of recording the child's information, using first-person narrative. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4

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, Devon
EX31 4AY

Responsible individual: Lucy Squire

Registered manager: Kelly Roddis

Inspectors

Carla Simkiss, Social Care Inspector
Hayley Booth, Social Care Inspector

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