

2816187

Registered provider: Blue Elephant Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by an independent organisation. It provides short- and medium-term care for up to three children.

This is the first inspection of the home since it was registered in December 2024. Since it was registered, five children have moved in, and four children have moved out. Two of these children were in the home on a planned temporary basis. At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2024.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 June 2025

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The inspector spent time with the child living in the home and spoke to two children who have left the home, via telephone and using video call. All three children were very positive about the manager, staff and the home itself. The inspector saw supportive and engaging interactions between staff and the child in the home, but also the other two children via the telephone. The children who have left the home speak regularly to the manager and other members of the team.

Staff and the manager provide warm, welcoming and individualised care for children in the home. They spend time getting to know children and their specific needs, likes and dislikes. When children are in the home for short periods of time, staff ensure that they quickly learn information about them. They document this information so it can be passed onto their next home.

Staff focus on building trusting, fun and honest relationships with children. This has been key to the current child having remained in the home despite some significant challenges and changes. Children take part in fun activities on a regular basis, and they are involved in the planning of them.

Staff and the manager have effective working relationships with external agencies. This has been important in ensuring the safety of the children in the home. The manager has continued to attend strategy discussions in relation to concerns about incidents of a child going missing, despite them no longer living in the home. A family member stated that the communication from the home is excellent.

Staff use creativity to engage children in education. They advocate on children's behalf to external agencies when they feel their responses do not consider the starting point of children. There are steps being taken to support the current child in the home to move into mainstream education at a pace that the child is comfortable with.

Children are encouraged to share their views, wishes and feelings in the home, and this is reinforced by the open and honest conversations that staff have with them. Staff understand the importance of making memories and have documented children's time in the home through carefully curated photobooks.

Staff and the manager are dedicated to promoting children's time with family. They have advocated on children's behalf for them to attend important events, despite having come across some barriers.

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

Staff understand the risks and vulnerabilities of the children in the home. They take steps to reduce these through encouraging children to make positive choices and by providing fun and engaging activities.

Staff were unable to reduce the risks relating to two children when they were living in the home. This led to the children moving. The manager considered elements of the risks related to the children prior to them moving into the home. However, specific issues around the location of the home were not explored thoroughly enough, particularly alongside the skills and experience of the staff team.

Staff and the manager respond effectively to incidents where children go missing from home and disrupt these through effective relationship building. The manager has continued these relationships with two children who have left the home. The importance of this was demonstrated when one child went missing from their new placement, but maintained contact with the manager, which she shared with the police. This ultimately supported the child being located and safeguarded.

Staff use a relationship-based approach to managing children's behaviour. There are clear boundaries in place, which are managed in a way that feels supportive to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is highly ambitious for the children in her care and has clear expectations of her staff team. As a result, children in the home receive high-quality and loving care.

Leaders and managers understand the children in the home, their starting points and how their lived experiences have impacted on their decision-making. The manager is a strong advocate for the children in the home and takes effective action if the responses from external agencies are ineffective.

Staff report the manager to be very supportive, and they say that they enjoy working in the home. Despite having been involved in some difficult incidents, all staff report feeling very well supported by both the manager and senior managers.

The training provided for staff is effective in helping them to support the children in the home. Specific training relating to the therapeutic approach that the home uses is not always provided in a timely enough manner. Supervision is effective in providing staff with space to reflect, but the recording of these discussions is inconsistent. When a serious incident that occurred at another home was explored during a supervision, this was dealt with appropriately, but the actions taken were not accurately recorded. The manager has not provided written oversight on some incidents in the home.

The manager understands the home's strengths and areas for development and has plans in place to address these.

Leaders and managers encourage children being involved in all decision-making, and the relationship-based ethos of the home further encourages this. Staff have sensitive conversations with the children in the home to support them to develop their views and tolerance in respect of diversity.

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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they match the skills and experience of the staff team with any risks associated with new children coming into the home, and effectively record and assess their ability to mitigate against these risks. In addition, the registered person must ensure that they provide regular written oversight of significant incidents in the home to ensure that the quality of care being provided to children is being assessed.	1 July 2025

Recommendations

- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. If concerns are identified in respect of staff's understanding of this, the registered person should ensure that they record a clear plan of action of how they will improve the knowledge of this staff member. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)

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: 2816187

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Elephant Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual: Cera Pudney

Registered manager: Kealeigh Braund

Inspector

Helen Cushnie, Social Care Inspector

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