

SC038780

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager is experienced and registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 June 2023

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: 1 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2023	Full	Good
11/10/2021	Full	Good
27/11/2019	Full	Good
18/04/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have good relationships with staff. Staff encourage children to take part in activities that they enjoy. Children's views are sought through family meetings and one-to-one meetings with staff. Children know how to make complaints if they feel unhappy with any aspect of their care. The manager listens to children's views and acts on these, if possible. This helps children to feel listened to.

Some children have improved their social skills and engagement with staff support. For example, one child had previously been isolated in their bedroom but is now spending time downstairs, engaging with staff. One external professional said of one child, 'They have total trust in staff.' Another child said, 'The staff are my family.'

Children have made progress in education. Staff support children even when journeys to school are long. Staff celebrate children's achievements. Children have goals for education and employment. Additionally, staff encourage children into further education when the time comes. One headteacher reported that a child has taken GCSE exams because 'the staff have been amazing'. Where children are not attending full-time education, staff could provide further educational activities and more structure and routine during the day.

Staff are committed to providing support even when children leave the home. Children feel confident in moving on as they have good support from staff. However, planning to support children to move on to the next stage of their life is not clear.

A child's bedroom is in a poor state of disrepair and unwelcoming. When children have requested changes to their bedroom, this is not resolved promptly. Staff do not talk to children about why their requests cannot always be granted. This has an impact on children's sense of self-worth.

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

When incidents occur, these are recorded but records do not clearly set out what happened at the start of an incident. When children are held by staff, records are not sufficiently detailed. This means that children and staff do not always understand what happened. This reduces opportunities to identify ways to reduce repeated incidents.

Staff do not consistently support children to develop positive relationships with their peers. When issues of conflict occur between children, staff are quick to respond. However, one child said, 'I trust that [name of manager] is doing something about it, but I don't feel it is happening fast enough.' Staff do not support children in a way that is set out within the home's statement of purpose.

When discussions take place between staff and children following an incident, they are not always helpful for children. There are occasions when the focus is on what children should not do, rather than an understanding as to the underlying reasons for the incident. This reduces the opportunity for staff to provide children with an understanding about being safe.

When children's behaviour falls below expectation, staff rarely use behavioural consequences. When they are used, they are proportionate and the manager has oversight, although this is not yet consistent. In relation to how children's behaviours are supported, one child said, 'The staff can be inconsistent.' This view is also shared by staff. Managers do not challenge staff effectively about their practice. The manager discusses the consequences and reasons for them with the children. This helps children to reflect on and discuss the support needed to reduce the likelihood of future incidents occurring. However, the manager does not yet follow this up with discussions with staff in their individual supervisions. This means that the manager does not challenge staff practice when required.

Children rarely go missing from care. When children are missing, staff are proactive in looking for them and liaising with external professionals to share information. Recordings of actions taken by staff are clear and there is a multi-agency approach.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a very experienced manager who is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and very committed to the children and team. She has very good relationships with the children, and she is always available to them. She understands the children very well, which helps her and the team to support children to make progress.

Staff said that the manager supports them very well. One staff member said, 'I feel the home is managed well and [name of manager] is a great support to staff and children.' An external professional said, 'I feel so fortunate that [name of child] has ended up with [name of manager] and the team. He has come such a long way.'

All staff benefit from an effective induction and training. This helps staff, at all levels, to understand how children's previous experiences may have affected them. One staff member said, 'I feel like I have really learned a lot.' Additional training to meet the individual needs of children is sourced, though it is not yet attended by all staff. The opportunities for staff reflection and learning are limited and opportunities to learn from practice are often missed. Addressing this shortfall would further enhance care practice.

Staff are provided with regular supervision by the manager. However, these supervision meetings are, at times, of poor quality. These discussions could be improved with a greater focus on discussing the individual needs of the children and setting clear targets for staff to achieve.

The most recent quality-of-care review completed by the manager does not evaluate in depth or reflect on the previous six months. This reduces the understanding of

the strengths and areas for development. The development plan is generic and does not yet set actions for how the home is going to develop its practice. This can impact on the quality of care provided to 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, 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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iv)(xii)(xiii)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that children are supported by staff to develop positive relationships with peers. It also refers to the registered person ensuring that, when there are issues relating to bullying, a clear plan is put in place to address these, and children's feelings are considered at all times.	17 August 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—	17 August 2023

understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vii)(c)(i)) This specifically refers to the registered person ensuring that improvements required in some of the children’s bedrooms are addressed without delay. It also refers to staff being creative in helping children to be involved in personalising their bedrooms to make them a relaxing space.	
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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;	17 August 2023

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)(c)(e)(h)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff work together effectively, providing consistent care for children. It also refers to staff being supported to access additional training to meet the individual needs of children. Furthermore, the registered person should ensure that reflective practice is embedded within the team and that, when areas for improvement are identified, a clear action plan is put in place.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality-of-care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality-of-care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a) (5))	17 August 2023

This particularly refers to the registered person ensuring that there is a suitable monitoring system in place to enable evaluation and reflective practice in order to improve care provided to children. It also refers to reports being completed at least every six months and sent to HMCI within 28 days.

This is a repeated requirement.

Recommendations

- The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned clearly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff consistently encourage children to engage in educational activity and structure to their days, particularly where children are not attending formal education. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

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: SC038780

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 20-21, Pullman Business Court, Mallard Way, Pride Park, Derby DE24 8GX

Responsible individual: Pradeep Manaktala

Registered manager: Lisa Owens

Inspectors

Kathryn Hurley, Social Care Inspector
Alli Tandy, Social Care Inspector

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