

SC414516

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who have social and emotional difficulties.

The home is led by a suitably experienced manager.

There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 1 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
08/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
25/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
23/01/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children's home is warm and welcoming and feels like a family home. The home is furnished and decorated to a very high standard and has a relaxed atmosphere. The staff and managers celebrate children's achievements by displaying certificates and photos around the home. This helps the children to hold on to important memories of their time living at the home. Staff and children all said it feels like their home.

The staff support children to use the outside garden space well for growing their own vegetables. The children get to enjoy their garden because staff have made this a fun and enjoyable area and so children enjoy outdoor hobbies and pursuits. There are plans to build a new garden area with a peaceful theme. This will provide an escape for children and make it more tranquil.

Children share their interests with staff. This is possible because of the diverse interests and experiences of staff. Children take part in hobbies and activities away from the home, like roller skating and going to the gym. Children's interests are often linked to good health and well-being. Children take part in bigger planned activities like camping, walking and fishing. This excellent range of activities means that the children develop new life skills and their confidence grows.

Children and staff have developed excellent relationships. The children speak very highly of the staff and have developed strong bonds that have helped them to become very settled. The staff understand the need for children to feel loved. Staff use firm and consistent behavioural boundaries, as any good parent would. Children accept this because their use is genuine, consistent and caring. The manager and staff understand the importance of developing relationships with the children, an ethos shared throughout the staff team.

The staff support the children to engage in the local community through projects and charity work. The staff and manager promote children's engagement in the community from the time the children move in. It allows children to become involved with and connect to their community. It creates a sense of identity and belonging. This is exceptional.

Children are making excellent progress with education and with their own independent learning. The home uses a bespoke model of education combined with on-site learning and provision at another of the organisation's homes. The joined-up working between the education and care staff is outstanding and they work together seamlessly. One child recently moved to the home and education staff have refused to allow the time waiting for an education, health and care plan to affect his progress. He is fully engaged in the curriculum and is enjoying learning. A child's

social worker said, 'He [the child] feels he will be ready for mainstream provision by 16 and that is an amazing achievement.'

Another child has made significant progress and now has options that were not thought possible from his starting point when moving to the home. This is testament to the excellent learning and development opportunities children experience.

Children are in very good health. The physical environment of the home and its surrounding area supports this. The children are supported to take part in activities and exercise which mean they stay healthy and make good choices. Children look well and happy. They have access to health services and are well supported to attend appointments, both planned and unplanned.

Children are supported to see their families. Staff are aware of the impact this can have on children and so remain vigilant. The staff are trusted by social workers to manage family time and they work together with external professionals to make decisions in the best interests of the child. One child has recently been through a challenging time and has required a great deal of support from staff to get through this. The relationships built with staff over time have meant that he has coped better than expected.

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

Children feel safe, loved and protected from harm. There are no concerns for children around exploitation, accidents or self-harm and they do not go missing from care. All children said that they feel safe.

Staff know what to do if incidents take place. All the children have individual behaviour support plans and risk assessments to safeguard them should they go missing or become involved in anything concerning. Staff are experienced and knowledgeable. This is used to good effect and to create an environment in which incidents or concerns are safely managed. One child said, 'That if it wasn't for the home they would not be in a good place.'

Children are supported to take age-appropriate risks, depending on their age and stage of development. They are encouraged to make good decisions for their safety and welfare. They respond to consistent behavioural boundaries. There are arrangements for children to engage in age-appropriate activities in the community and with friends. Children have phones and communicate regularly with staff, in line with their safety plans.

Children respond to the positive environment they live in. They are supported to manage their feelings, emotions and behaviours in a positive way. When children have felt the need to release emotion in a negative way, staff support them through this. Staff have techniques that they know work to divert and distract children when challenging behaviour escalates. Children are supported to see the benefits of

positive behaviour. They receive planned and informal rewards, like in a family situation.

The manager and staff have built exceptionally strong relationships with the children. This creates a protective factor because children feel secure. This secure base creates a foundation for children to grow and develop, knowing the home is a safe place.

The physical environment is safe and secure. The location of the home is assessed carefully by the manager and the children enjoy where they live. The staff team is aware of the risks in the local area and consider this when planning activities and future projects.

Safe staff recruitment practices are embedded in the organisation, and this helps to safeguard children. There is little staff turnover and no use of temporary staff.

Some risk assessments and behaviour support plans do not yet contain all the most up-to-date information about the children. However, this does not affect the care provided and staff know how to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced and qualified registered manager leads this home. He has led this home for several years and knows the children and the home exceptionally well. He has high expectations of himself and staff, and high aspirations for the children. He advocates for children and challenges professionals to ensure that the children's needs are met to a very high standard.

The manager is a visible presence in the home and looks to make improvements in how he and the staff can better support the children. Staff benefit from the manager's positive, supportive and open manner. The staff speak highly of the support provided both formally and informally by the manager. Staff receive regular supervision which is effective and develops their care practice. The manager constantly monitors staff development and promotes training opportunities. Staff's mandatory training is largely up to date. However, one staff member is out of the timescale for completing the relevant qualification for staff working in residential childcare.

Staff love working at the home. Most have worked there for several years. Staff speak with enthusiasm about the home's strengths and the progress children make. The staff team is comprised of a diverse range of individuals who bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to children's lives. There is almost no staff turnover. Several staff said it is the best job that they have ever had. Staff are encouraged to progress and develop if they want to, and they trust the home's leaders. Children make significant progress because of what is considered by all to be a family.

The manager encourages staff to develop their skills and talents. This means staff are confident in themselves and they try new ideas and fully involve the children.

This helps to develop the strong relationships between children and staff and leads to outstanding care.

Staff training and induction processes for new staff are effective. They help to ensure that the staff have the knowledge and skills to provide excellent care to children. The more recently employed staff spoke highly of the learning, development and support they have received. Staff are on a continuous learning journey, with the children's care, support and protection fundamental to their work. Team meetings and staff handovers between shifts provide opportunities for informal reflection. These are regular and important for staff.

The manager has good oversight of the quality of care provided. He reviews all aspects of the day-to-day operation of the home and uses this information to inform the development of children's care plans and ensure they are relevant. However, these are not always effective. At times, they lack a deeper evaluation that could provide information to help and support ongoing improvement and development.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purpose of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)) This specifically relates to a member of staff who is yet to complete their level 3 diploma.	22 May 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice and reviewing incidents and amending care plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

- The information set out in the statement of purpose is an essential part of the process of agreement between the registered person and placing authority that a placement in that home is the right one for that child, and that the child will be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. This should include age ranges and independence work. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.6)

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: SC414516

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: Douglas Harrison

Inspector

Chris Haines, Social Care Inspector

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