

2494662

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a large national provider of children's homes. The home provides care for up to three children with learning disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder.

The provider closed the home for refurbishment in March 2021. It reopened in April 2022 with a new registered manager and staff team. Children have been cared for at the home since June 2022.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 December 2022

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: 5 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
02/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a nurturing and supportive home. Staff provide children with a high standard of personalised care that meets their complex needs. The high quality of care and professional practice is contributing to children's development. Children are making significant progress in their education, health and emotional well-being, personal care, communication and social interaction.

Staff encourage children to express their wishes and feelings, regardless of their preferred method of communication. Staff take time to understand what children are saying and respond appropriately to children's wishes. Staff develop individual plans that enhance children's ability to communicate and build relationships.

Before agreeing to care for a child, the manager fully considers the staff's abilities and experience and whether they would be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. Likewise, the manager carefully considers the compatibility of the child with the children already living at the home.

Two children have moved into the home since it reopened. Their moves were successful and they are settled and making progress. They had gradual introductions to the home. The children received information in ways that were tailored to their communication needs and their capacity for understanding.

The manager and staff used social stories effectively to help the children understand why they were coming to live at the home and what it would be like living here, and to help them cope with this significant change in their lives.

The culture of the home encourages and supports children's participation in education. Staff work closely with schools to resolve any barriers to children's learning. Since coming to live at the home, children have made significant improvements with their school attendance, communication and tolerance of other children.

When a child does not have a school placement, the manager and staff work closely with local authorities to make sure that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. The manager and staff act as effective advocates for children's education as a good parent would do. The manager has escalated concerns with the local authorities about the delays in finding a school for one child.

Staff understand children's specific health and emotional needs. They monitor children's health. They make sure that children receive safe and effective advice, support and treatment that meet their needs. The arrangements for managing children's medication are safe.

Staff provide children with high-quality personal care and support them to develop independent personal care skills. Staff always make sure that children's personal care needs are managed safely and sensitively.

Children take part in a wide range of exciting, engaging and inclusive activities, which enable them to follow their interests and develop their confidence and social skills. They have the chance to try new things and take controlled risks as part of their development.

Children live in a pleasant and comfortable house that meets their needs. They have sufficient personal space, and their bedrooms reflect their interests and needs. The house is well maintained and free from avoidable hazards.

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

Children are protected from harm. Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and identified risks. They recognise when children may be at risk of harm. They know how to keep children safe and what they must do when they have concerns about children's welfare.

Staff continually assess the dangers for each child and follow up-to-date plans effectively to reduce the risk of harm. They follow court-directed orders consistently to reduce risks to children. Staffing arrangements are consistent with children's plans so that the right number of staff support each child to provide them with the level of supervision they require.

Staff's nurturing and consistent approach and clear communication help children to feel safe, manage their emotions and make sense of the world around them.

Staff understand that children may communicate their feelings through their behaviour. Staff know that children need time to make sense of information. Therefore, staff use clear and effective communication and their positive relationships with the children to deal with any problems constructively.

Staff have the skills and confidence to manage difficult situations safely. They use restraint appropriately to protect the child and those around them. The number of difficult situations and the need to use restraint have reduced significantly.

Detailed records of serious incidents and the use of restraint enable the manager to evaluate what happened. They are able to identify effective practice and respond promptly to any issues or concerns. The manager's analysis provides the opportunity to amend practice to meet children's needs. For example, changes to one child's bedtime routine have helped them to settle at night.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is confident and qualified and has expertise in caring for children with learning difficulties and complex additional needs. The manager is well organised

and provides strong and effective leadership. They have high expectations for the standard of care that children receive. They aspire for children to be safe, happy, understood and helped to reach their potential.

The manager has a clear understanding of children's plans and the progress they are making. The manager and staff recognise small steps in children's progress and build on them. They make the necessary improvements to ensure that children receive the best possible support. For example, the introduction of research-based models of care is having a positive impact on children's experiences and development.

The manager and staff maintain positive working relationships with other professionals and agencies, including education providers and health services. The manager makes sure that these partners play their role and provide children with the high-quality support that they need at the right time.

Staff are enthusiastic, caring and resilient. They enjoy spending time with the children and seeing them make progress. Staff share the ethos of the home in providing a positive, nurturing and safe place for children to live. Staff have a detailed understanding of each child's needs and plans. They work together as a team to provide children with a high standard of consistent care and support.

The manager makes sure that staff have the right support, training and guidance to provide them with the essential skills and knowledge for understanding and meeting children's individual needs. The manager makes sure that staff receive specialist training that benefits the children in their care, including training in methods of communication, intensive interaction, positive behaviour support and sensory processing.

The home has some staff vacancies. Nevertheless, the staffing arrangements provide continuity of care for children and ensure that they are supported by people who know them well. There are always enough suitable staff available to provide children with the right level of care and supervision.

Children's records provide a detailed picture of their experiences. They provide evidence of children's measurable progress. The records are written in an engaging way that shows children's strengths and achievements. However, some records do not always evaluate the effectiveness of direct work with children, children's engagement and understanding of the activity, and what needs to happen next to support children's development.

Staff supervision records do not always show that staff have opportunities to reflect critically on their practice and the needs and progress of children in their care. Their training is not evaluated to show how they apply their learning to children's everyday care. Furthermore, the supervisor and member of staff do not always agree actions for staff to develop their knowledge and skills.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that supervision allows staff to reflect critically on their practice and the needs and progress of children in their care; that they evaluate training and how they apply learning to children's everyday care; and that staff and their supervisor agree specific actions to be completed to develop their knowledge, skills and practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that records of direct work with children provide a significant contribution to the understanding of children's needs, views, lived experience and progress, and inform their plans. This includes making sure that children's records always include an analysis of effectiveness of direct work with children and children's engagement and understanding of the activity, and what needs to happen next to support children's development. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.5)

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: 2494662

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

Registered provider address: Keys Care Ltd, Maybrook House, Queensway,
Halesowen B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Lisa McCloskey

Registered manager: Steven Ince

Inspector

Nick Veysey, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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