

2495335

Registered provider: Keys Education Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private company. The home provides care and support for four children who can no longer live at home.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. We last visited this setting on 9 May 2019. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

The manager resigned from this home on 4 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean that the young people's welfare is not promoted, and the care and experiences of the young people are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 9 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The current standards of care and support provided at this home mean that young people's safety, emotional well-being and educational needs are not met. Staff supervision of the young people does not meet their assessed needs. There are long periods during the day and evening when staff are unaware of where young people are and who they are with. A social worker said that she had given the home permission to drop a young person off at his friends, but that she was unaware that this was not being monitored.

Two young people are attending education and making some progress. However, some young people have refused to attend their school or college. There are no routines in place to promote education and learning, and young people who refuse education remain in bed until dinner time. In addition, several staff members were unable to tell the inspector what academic level the young people were functioning at and what support they needed.

Staff do not prepare young people to move in and out of the home in a planned way. Three of the young people should be preparing to move on from the home. However, there is no transition plan or local authority pathway plan in place for them. One young person will be 18 years old in a few months. He said, 'I have not got a clue what is going on. I have asked to live in [name of area] and my social worker said that she is looking.' Staff said that they have provided the local authority with some suitable accommodation arrangements, but these have not been explored. The young person does not have an external advocate to help him through this process. Similarly, there is little information about how young people transition into the home, for example whether the move was planned or an emergency, whether they visited the home prior to moving, or how the move went.

The young people's independence plans are poor. There is no information of what skills the young people have to be able to care for themselves, or how staff can support them to gain the necessary skills. As a result, young people are not well prepared to move into adulthood.

At the last inspection, the manager was asked to ensure that the safer area report was used in conjunction with the young person's impact risk assessment, so that they know the area is safe for the young person. The home is located next to a petrol station, on a main road and with access to nearby bridges. These risks have not been considered in the most recent admission to the home. These risks have not impacted on the young person, but they have the potential to do so. Therefore, the requirement has been repeated.

Despite the shortfalls found, staff have made sure that the young people are linked in with specialist health services that support their individual needs.

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

Safeguarding practice in this home is poor. Day-to-day care is not arranged and delivered to keep each young person safe. For example, some young people are placed at risk of harm because staff do not know their whereabouts for long periods of the day. Records kept in the home do not show where young people are dropped off or picked up from, who they are with or what their demeanour is on their return to the home. Therefore, staff are not compiling soft intelligence to ensure that young people are safe while out in the community.

The registered manager and staff are not fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting young people, and effective action is not always taken when there are serious concerns about young people's welfare. In addition, not all staff demonstrate that they have the skills to identify and act on signs that a young person may be at risk of harm and take steps to reduce or manage risks effectively. This means that young people are not robustly protected from harm.

The inspector identified from documentation, and in discussions with the staff, that one young person was using an unknown substance and was known to smoke this while in the company of his friends. Staff say that a young person often returns to the home under the influence of an unknown substance. Despite this, the staff and the registered manager continued to drive the young person and drop them off in an area of concern where there are concerns about the prevalence of drugs and concerns about young people being exploited into gangs.

All young people have mobile phones that are not monitored by the staff. Staff do not know who the young people are contacting or what mobile applications young people have access to. Staff were aware that a young person had been involved in selling unknown substances. Staff encouraged the young person to delete the contact number from their phone, but no further action was taken to protect all involved. Further to this, a young person has returned to the home in unknown vehicles. The staff have captured the registration numbers but have failed to pass this information on to safeguarding professionals. Staff spoken to during the inspection could not relate their training on criminal exploitation and county lines to the risks that the young person may be exposed to. This does not demonstrate that all staff have the knowledge and skills to effectively safeguard young people in their care.

Risk assessments are ineffective and do not reduce risks or demonstrate safe care practice. For example, the risk assessment for one young person states that he is not at risk of exploitation, but this is a known risk. The risk assessments of another young person have not been updated after several strategy meetings have taken place to discuss the current risk factors and expected strategies that staff need to follow to minimise the risks to the young person. Consequently, staff are unaware of any changes to the care and safety of the young person. The current risk assessments do not contain suitable strategies for staff to follow to safely care for the young people on a day-to-day basis. This places young people at significant risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leaders and managers have failed to demonstrate that they inspire and lead a culture that helps young people to aspire to fulfil their potential. They are not leading and managing the home in a manner that is consistent with the aims outlined in their statement of purpose. Therefore, this fails to demonstrate that the care being delivered meets the individual needs of the young people or promotes their safety and welfare.

At the home's last inspection on 19 May 2019, a requirement was made to ensure that the registered manager considers the safer area report when placing young people at the home. This requirement has not been met.

The inspector found that the management review of placement planning and risk management is inadequate. Plans are of poor quality and/or incomplete. Although targets are identified for young people, there is limited evidence of any work being undertaken to meet these targets.

There are significant inconsistencies in risk management, education arrangements, pathway planning and responses to young people who are missing from home. The registered manager is failing to take sufficient action to address this poor practice in order to promote and safeguard the welfare of young people living in the home, leaving young people at risk of harm. Young people are routinely transported by staff to areas of significant risk during the day. The registered manager and staff are unaware of who the young people are associating with, their known whereabouts or if they are safe. Risk assessments do not provide staff with sufficient information or strategies to protect young people.

Day-to-day planning for young people is weak. For example, records do not provide information on the whereabouts of the young people when they are away from the home. The records of key-worker sessions are very limited in detail. They only reflect informal discussions, rather than offering a more comprehensive account of what the objective of the planned session was and how this links to the wider support to meet the young people's needs. For example, a young person who has been living at the home for four months and regularly returns home under the influence of an unknown substance only has two key-worker records pertaining to substance misuse. This fails to help the young person to understand the risks of substance misuse and keep themselves safe.

The registered manager has failed to utilise monitoring and review systems in order to analyse and evaluate the impact that these incidents have on the quality of care and safety for young people. This does not ensure that the safety and well-being of young people is paramount.

The registered manager resigned from this home in April 2021. An acting manager has been appointed. The acting manager has begun to complete an audit of the young people's files and supporting documents. She has requested some missing documents from the local authorities, and has also completed a contextualised

safeguarding screening tool for one young person and has sent it to the external safeguarding professionals.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))	7 June 2021
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(vi))	7 June 2021
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	7 June 2021

help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(viii)(ix)(x))	
*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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;	7 June 2021

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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(c))	
*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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(f)(g)(i))	7 June 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and	7 June 2021

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(e)(i))	
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))	7 June 2021
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; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.	7 June 2021

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)(b)(5))	
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered provider must ensure that children have access to appropriate advocacy support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- The registered provider must ensure that children have opportunities develop themselves and explore new and meaningful activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)
- The registered provider must ensure that case records are kept up-to-date and are signed and dated by the author. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: 2495335

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Education Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Maybrook House, Queensway,
Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Mark Dickinson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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