

# 2507631

Registered provider: Keys Educational Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider and offers care for up to four children. The provider states in the home's statement of purpose that it provides care for children with social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, three children and one young person were living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since September 2023.

**Inspection date: 8 January 2024**

**Date of last inspection:** 5 September 2023

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

## Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Since the last inspection, one child has turned 18 years old and continued to live in the home. Leaders and managers carefully assessed these arrangements and agreed that they are in the young person's best interests while suitable move-out plans are identified. Although potential living arrangements were identified for the young person, leaders and managers were concerned that the young person's needs would not be met. As a result, leaders and managers advocated for the young person to ensure that suitable levels of support are agreed for him before he moves. Despite this good work, there are no set plans for the young person to move out of the home. Leaders and managers have escalated their concerns to the relevant professionals, and further planning meetings have been agreed.

Two children have moved into the home since the last inspection. Before children move in, they are supported to visit and meet the staff and children who live there. This helps children to understand what it might be like for them to live in the home. It also provides the children who already live in the home with the opportunity to get to know the child who is moving in and explore and alleviate any worries that they may have.

When concerns about staff practice are raised, leaders and managers respond promptly to ensure that children are kept safe. Concerns are shared with the relevant external professionals, and appropriate actions and outcomes are agreed. Leaders and managers demonstrate a good understanding of the allegations management procedure, and they spend time with children following the conclusion of concerns to ensure that they are satisfied with the actions that have been taken. However, not all members of staff are able to confidently outline safeguarding procedures.

There has been one occasion when a child has gone missing from school. Staff followed the agreed protocols, including supporting school professionals to look for the child in the local area and contacting the child's family and friends. Following this occurrence, leaders and managers met with the relevant school leaders to agree the levels of classroom support to be provided for the child to prevent them from going missing again.

Children say that they enjoy living in their home. They explained that the staff care for them and help them. Interactions between staff and children are kind, friendly and supportive.

Children's progress is mixed. One child and a young person regularly attend school and college, whereas other children of compulsory school age do not. When children

are not in full-time education, staff find it difficult to engage them in structured educational activities that promote their learning and development.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in a range of fun and enjoyable activities outside of education, including spending time with friends and family, ice skating and horse-riding. However, not all children take advantage of these opportunities and often opt to spend prolonged periods of time in their bedrooms. Although staff try to encourage a healthy balance between time spent on screens and participating in other enjoyable activities, this is not always effective. As a result, some progress that was being made by children has stagnated, and there are emerging concerns about some children's physical and emotional health, personal care and the development of social and independent skills.

Children continue to require support from staff to keep their bedrooms clean and tidy. However, this support is not always sufficient to equip children with the skills they will need when they move out of the home in the future. Some bedrooms are not consistently maintained to a satisfactory level of cleanliness.

Care plans provide staff with an overview of children's needs and some of the strategies that they can use to promote children's welfare and development. Key-work sessions are used to provide children with positive messages. However, when the strategies used by staff are not successful, there is limited evaluation and/or exploration about what can be done differently. As a result, staff continue to encounter these difficulties, and the support that is offered to children is not reviewed or adapted.

Staff feel supported by leaders and managers, although they recognise that there have been some staffing and management changes that have impacted the consistency and quality of care. Despite this, staff recognise the recent positive changes that are being made.

Leaders and managers have taken some action to address some of the shortfalls that were identified at the previous inspection. For example, appropriate fire-safety plans have been implemented, and all the children have demonstrated that they can safely evacuate the building when the fire alarm sounds. However, leaders and managers are clear that the home continues to be on a journey of improvement, and they recognise that there is still work to be done to ensure that all children are receiving good-quality care and making progress.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 05/09/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 24/10/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 23/03/2022      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |
| 27/07/2021      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

# 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      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a) (2)(f)(g)(i)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure that the monitoring and analysis of care supports staff to meet the needs of children effectively.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> | 29 March 2024 |
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 29 March 2024 |

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| <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; and</p> <p>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.<br/>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)(vi))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure that children's bedrooms are maintained to a good standard of cleanliness. In addition, the registered person should ensure that staff help children to develop the skills that they need to care for themselves effectively. This specifically relates to children being supported to maintain their person hygiene.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> |                      |
| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>29 March 2024</p> |

promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;

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; and

help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans.  
(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(x))

In particular, the registered person should support staff to provide care for children that promotes their educational attendance and achievement. When children are not attending full-time education, staff should engage children in suitable structures activities that promote their learning and development. This should also support children to build their confidence and help them to reintegrate into formal education.

## Recommendation

- The registered person should support staff to engage in the safeguarding culture of the home so that they understand what to do if they identify concerns about children's safety. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 2507631

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Keys Educational Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Maybrook House, Queensway, Halesowen,  
Worcestershire B63 4AH

**Responsible individual:** Steven Cairns

**Registered manager:** Emma Lyall

## Inspector

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector

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