

2743656

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home was registered with Ofsted in November 2023 to care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties on a short-term basis. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in this home.

There is a suitably qualified and experienced manager.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Two children have come to live at this home since it was registered and are both still living here. The progress of children is mixed. In some areas children are making good progress, but this is not consistent. For example, children are not always kept sufficiently safe and their additional needs are not always fully understood. Staff have tried to build positive relationships with children, but this is not yet helping them to feel safe.

There are some positive routines and boundaries in place for children, but these are not currently sufficiently developed. One child is not yet engaging in education and does not have a positive routine in place. Another child is accessing learning online, on a part time basis. When one child did not feel able to engage in formal learning, different activities were explored so they could learn in a more practical way. This included helping staff to build a chicken coop for the garden and developing plans for an allotment. Children are supported by staff to access activities in the local community. One child has enjoyed going crabbing or for outings to the beach.

The home environment is well presented; it is clean and well maintained. There are spacious living areas that are comfortable, clean and tidy. The pictures on the walls and the decor give this a homely feel. The children have spacious bedrooms that they can change in line with their interests. There is a large garden for children to spend time in. One child has recently built a barbecue so that children and staff can enjoy meals outside. There are chickens in the garden that children are helping to care for. One child has built a caring relationship with the chickens and was observed to cuddle them and feed them. Children are being encouraged to eat healthy meals and to be involved in preparing food.

Staff are respectful and they listen to children's views. Through listening to the children, they try to adapt the care that is provided to them. Staff are thoughtful about children's needs and how best to care for them. One social worker said that the strong relationships between their child and the staff meant that they were being supported in a positive and nurturing way that did not make the child feel judged.

Staff have developed an understanding of children's cultural needs. Staff provide children with the opportunity to discuss topics relating to their identity and culture. Actions required by staff however, are not always actioned promptly. This was recognised by managers during the inspection.

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

Leaders and managers understand some risks that are posed to children. Through their positive relationships they can often recognise when children may struggle and need help and support. On some occasions, leaders and managers have taken robust action to keep children safe. However, this is not always consistent or effective. Although leaders and managers are working together with external safeguarding agencies to review the needs of children, risks remain, and more action is needed to keep one child safe.

Some serious incidents have occurred for one child. Staff attempt to offer their support and calm the situation by using gentle language and humour. This is not always successful and staff have used restraint appropriately to keep the child safe. However, staff intervention has not always worked and due to staff being unable to manage the risk, police and paramedics have attended the home. Incidents have escalated resulting in the child being restrained with high level of force from the police. When this happens staff do not challenge this and take control of the situation so the child experiences the least restrictive use of force possible.

Managers and staff talk to the children following serious incidents. They adapt and make changes collaboratively with the professionals in an attempt to reduce serious incidents occurring. Managers review practice, however records of incidents do not always clearly describe what happened. For example, staff fail to record their observations of children leading to incidents. This limits leaders and managers ability to review and adapt practice to better meet children's needs and to avoid future experiences which may be detrimental to children's well-being.

A positive plan is being developed to enable one child to have access to a phone and to develop greater levels of independence. This plan is being developed jointly with the child. When the child said that they were not ready for the next steps, the manager has really listened to the child and moved forward in line with their wishes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced manager who is regularly involved in children's day-to-day care. The manager has high aspirations for children and has a good knowledge of their starting points.

The manager works in partnership with people who are important to the children. He has regular contact with social workers, professionals and family members. This means that there is a team around each child who are all working together. There is evidence of the manager challenging external agencies when it is felt that conduct against children is inappropriate. One social worker commented about the positive way that the manager is working with other agencies to develop safer plans for children.

Team meetings are well attended, and staff supervisions are held regularly. These forums provide staff with the opportunity to reflect on practice, the support being offered, and the relationships that they have developed.

Monitoring and review systems completed by the manager are efficient. As a result, recording and reporting by staff is improving. This helps with continuous improvement so that there are positive levels of reflection and learning.

There is a stable team of staff who work consistently with children. In many areas positive practice has been developed with staff but other areas are still in need of development. The manager considers ways to improve practice through training and development, however, gaps remain with staff's understanding and knowledge of supporting children with their specific complex needs. This is a missed opportunity for staff to understand more about the emerging needs of children quickly.

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 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff understand their responsibility of clearly recording matters relating to incidents. This includes observations of triggers to help identify patterns of behaviours to help support children with their future struggles.	30 June 2024
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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	30 June 2024

In particular, that staff have the confidence to intervene and challenge poor practice towards children when this is seen from other professionals.	
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff have an understanding of each child's specific and complex needs and receives the relevant training to endorse this.	30 June 2024

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: 2743656

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Second Floor, Queensway, Halesowen
B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Guy Mammatt

Registered manager: Jamie Bygrave

Inspectors

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector
Stacey Pellow, Social Care Inspector

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