

SC008490

Registered provider: Keys Stepping Stones Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four children. The provider states in their statement of purpose that they provide care for children with EBD (social and emotional difficulties). The home is privately owned and managed.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in February 2016.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCIFF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 15 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. This report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 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: 10 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2020	Full	Good
11/09/2018	Full	Good
05/07/2017	Full	Good
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make positive progress in relation to their individual starting points, across aspects of their welfare, physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. They benefit from well-planned, highly personalised care that promotes their needs effectively.

Children enjoy trusting and secure relationships with staff, and they sustain their positive attachments. Children have stability and consistency in their lives. One child said, 'It's alright. It's just a normal care home.'

Children are encouraged to spend time with their friends and families. Consequently, they sustain their familiar relationships with the people that are most important to them.

Children attend school or alternative educational provision, with good support and encouragement from staff. Staff work closely with the providers of the children's education to promote regular attendance and educational achievements.

Children enjoy positive activities at home and in the wider community. Staff promote the children's interests and hobbies. Children enjoy swimming, horse riding, trampolining, photography and visiting prestigious motor car events.

Children are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician and have access to these services when needed. Medical consent is in place, and staff are clear about the types of health decisions and responsibilities that are delegated to them.

Some children access therapy through the organisation. However, not all children in need of additional support are currently engaged in therapy. A child's social worker said, '[Name of child] is really struggling. They haven't had any therapy since May 2021, since the last therapist left.' The manager has arranged a meeting with the child's social worker to address this issue, and a new therapist has very recently been recruited.

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

Children's safety is at the centre of the staff's practice. Children are kept safe and feel safe. The use of clear risk assessment and effective, safe working practices promotes the safety and well-being of children. Risks associated with children are managed safely and effectively by staff.

Children know how to make a complaint, and their complaints are investigated and taken seriously. Children raised no complaints with the inspector during this inspection. None of the children living at the home have gone missing from care. On

the rare occasion that a previous child did go missing from home, staff followed the home's missing-person procedures and ensured that the child returned safely.

Children become increasingly safer because of the actions staff take to support and protect them. Children are protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm. Allegations of abuse are reported to the appropriate authorities quickly, and staff are familiar with their safeguarding responsibilities and roles.

Staff promote positive behaviour and support children to manage their feelings and behaviours safely. Risks associated with children are well known and understood by staff.

The use of restraint is always a last resort that is only ever used to protect children from harm. When restraint is used, it has been used safely and professionally by staff. All behaviour management incidents are regularly reviewed, monitored and evaluated by the registered manager.

The accommodation provided for the children is physically safe, appropriately secure, comfortable and homely. Health and safety matters are addressed effectively by staff. Children's bedrooms are personalised in accordance with their wants, needs and wishes. The home is currently in the process of making some homely improvements and is being completely redecorated. However, one child's bedroom wall is damaged and needs replastering.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Children benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively. A suitably qualified and experienced registered manager demonstrates effective leadership of staff and the day-to-day operations of the home.

Staff meet the aims and objectives as set out in the home's statement of purpose. The home has met and addressed the previous requirement and recommendation from the last inspection. Children are now engaged in full-time education, and significant incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities to keep children safe from harm.

Staff are well-managed, supervised and led. Staff keep themselves up to date with training, so they have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the children. Staff work closely with all external professionals, schools and social workers to ensure that children benefit from effective, high-quality support.

The registered manager ensures that the home is suitably staffed and resourced to meet the needs and numbers of the children. Several members of staff have left their positions, resulting in three staff vacancies. The registered manager has used the same agency workers to cover staff shortages to promote continuity for the children. Staff told the inspector that, 'We have recently found it difficult due to staffing, but we have stuck together throughout for the children.' A therapist reported, 'The staff have been so dedicated.'

The registered manager makes effective use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The manager tackles any identified weaknesses to secure the home's improvement.

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.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the damaged bedroom wall is repaired without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that new staff are recruited so that the home is fully staffed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)
- The registered person should ensure that all children have access to therapy, in line with their individual plans and the approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

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: SC008490

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Stepping Stones Limited

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

Responsible individual: Mark Dickinson

Registered manager: Claire Brady

Inspector

Anthony Kyem, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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