

SC008490

Registered provider: Keys Stepping Stones Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and managed.

The registered manager is very experienced and appropriately qualified.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 March 2020

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/09/2018	Full	Good
05/07/2017	Full	Good
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/07/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who live in this home are happy. They said that they like their rooms and they seemed to enjoy spending time with staff. One child excitedly showed off all his new clothes. Another proudly showed the doll's clothes she has made, with the help of staff, from odd socks.

Children make good progress in terms of their behaviour, education, independence skills and personal appearance. A social worker said:

My young person has and continues to make very good progress overall. He is learning to manage and regulate his emotional outbursts. He is also learning to manage his personal care. Most importantly, he is learning to communicate appropriately with peers and adults.

Staff build warm and nurturing relationships with children. This helps children to settle into life in the home and make good progress.

Staff talked passionately about the children and are very child focused as well as therapeutically minded. They encourage children to participate in a range of activities in the home and the local and wider community. They join clubs such as football, gymnastics and dance. They enjoy watching films, doing arts and crafts, trampolining and going for walks and bike rides, among the many other activities they do.

Children all go to school and engage with learning while they are there. One child also enjoys going to breakfast and after-school club. Children usually start in alternative education, but often transfer, when the time is right, to mainstream schools.

Children mostly move out of the home in a planned way, usually into foster care or back to their parents. Some children move on to semi-independent living. Children are given the skills to enable them to move back into family life or successfully transition to adulthood.

Children have regular access to a pet dog. The dog is very popular with the children and has helped them during their times of distress. For example, children said that the dog knows when they are sad because he cuddles up to them. Also, when a child was refusing to enter the home on his first day, the dog met him in the car park and then ran into the house. The child followed the dog and was welcomed into the home.

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

Staff have not fully understood their roles and responsibilities in regard to safeguarding children, after a child made a disclosure. This could have corrupted a police investigation. The poor safeguarding practice has not been identified or challenged by the registered manager or senior managers within the organisation.

Staff take photos of children on their personal mobile phones. They are clear about the procedure of emailing the photos to the home and then deleting them from their own phones. However, this practice does not protect children or staff.

Staff understand the importance of building warm and supportive relationships with children. They also know the importance of applying firm, consistent rules and boundaries. These help children to feel safe and secure. Consequently, children do not go missing from the home and their behaviour improves significantly over time.

Risk management plans are clear and help staff to reduce risks for children. Staff consider specific risks for the activities the children participate in, but these are not recorded. However, other individual risk assessments help staff to reduce risks for the children while they are participating in activities.

Consequences are appropriate and tend to be restorative in nature, such as a child writing a letter of apology or writing their worries down to give to their worry monster. Staff help children to reduce their anxieties and anger with good de-escalation techniques such as humour and redirection. Adults only use restraint when children's behaviour becomes dangerous. The frequency of restraint reduces over time for each child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is very experienced and appropriately qualified. She is very child focused. There are good outcomes for children because the registered manager has a therapeutic approach, ensuring that children feel loved, valued and respected. Children move back into family life and attend mainstream schools. This significantly increases the children's life chances.

The registered manager provides strong and supportive leadership. She has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and has child-focused plans to further improve the home. Poor safeguarding practice was not identified after one isolated incident. However, other incidents have been managed well.

Most staff are qualified and very experienced. New staff complete a good induction programme that prepares them well for working with the children. Staff know the children well and are passionate about helping them. They have access to a good training programme that provides them with the skills and knowledge they need to support the children effectively.

The registered manager seeks to establish close working relationships with external professionals, and forge positive relationships with children's families. On the whole, she achieves this. A social worker said she thought communication could be improved. The registered manager immediately ensured that communication was better for this social worker. The good partnership working supports the health, safety and well-being of children.

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
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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(v))	30/04/2020
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 the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(e))	30/04/2020

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, 2nd Floor, Queensway,
Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Sarah Haworth

Registered manager: Claire Brady

Inspector

Joanne Vyas, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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