

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 is privately owned and managed. It provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection there were four children living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

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 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/08/2022	Full	Good
02/02/2022	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Full	Good
11/09/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff have positive relationships with the children. One child spoke to said that if they have any problems or worries, they can talk to the staff and they will listen. Staff encourage the children to express their views, wishes and feelings. Children take part in meetings to talk about the home and make suggestions about their home, the manager listens to these suggestions and responds to the requests. This shows children that their views and opinions are respected and valued and empowers them to have a voice in other areas of their lives.

Children's health and wellbeing needs are met. Staff make sure that children have access to routine health appointments and specific health professionals when necessary. The manager and staff work alongside the homes therapy team to share guidance and strategies to help meet children's individual needs.

Staff implement the organisations model of care. This model of care helps staff to regularly review children's progress. This model helps children to be involved in their care and identify areas they would like support with and captures the views of the staff team and in-house therapist.

Children have good attendance at school and are making progress in line with their academic targets. The manager and staff work collaboratively with schools and children's social workers when there have been any issues with education to make sure that there is a consistent response between professionals to ensure that children's educational needs are met.

Children who are new to the home are welcomed sensitively and with forward planning. The manager ensures that thorough assessments are completed prior to agreeing for children to move into the home. These identify the impact that the children may have on each other and what can be put in place to reduce any known risks.

The staff team have reflected on the ending of one child's placement. They have then used these lessons learnt to change the processes when it was time for another child to move on. There was a detailed plan for them to move on from the home and staff worked with their family and the new placement to ensure that the move was as positive as possible.

The home is warm and welcoming. There are photos throughout the home of the children and staff. Each area is furnished to a high standard and is a nice place for children to spend time. There is a notice board in the kitchen with information for children to access, this gives an institutionalised feel which is not in line with the ethos of the home.

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

When children raise safeguarding concerns and complaints they are taken seriously. These are investigated appropriately, and relevant professionals are informed. Complaints are treated seriously and are responded to. Urgent action is taken when necessary and children's welfare is prioritised throughout. Children understand what has happened as a result of their complaint.

Risk assessments and management plans are robust documents which provide clear guidance and strategies for staff to follow. Staff have evidenced their understanding of these documents through their day-to-day practice and support of the children in response to any significant events. However, there are some errors in the contents of some plans such as incorrect pronouns and incorrect children's names.

When it has been necessary to hold a child, it has been reasonable and proportionate. Staff and children receive a debrief following the incident. This helps children to understand why a hold may have been used and also helps children and staff to reflect on the event.

When children have been missing from the home, staff have taken appropriate action to locate them and return them to the home as quickly as possible. Reports are completed and all relevant professionals are notified. Managers' oversight is thorough and reflective, detailing what went well and where protocols for the staff team could be strengthened.

Consequences are reasonable and proportionate. There is oversight and from the manager and the effectiveness of the measure is evaluated. Staff aim to use restorative measures to help the children understand how to make positive choices and how their behaviours can impact others.

Direct work sessions are frequent and cover topics that are associated to the children's needs and vulnerabilities. In the main, this is conversational and takes place across the whole staff team. This is further enhanced by the use of restorative practice which gives the children an opportunity to reflect on their feelings, thoughts and behaviour while being supported by staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a registered manager in post who has high expectations for what all children can achieve. She leads by example and the staff are positive about the manager and describe a supportive environment. Staff spoken to describe the manager as readily available to provide advice and guidance.

The manager effectively uses internal and external monitoring systems and has a good vision for the development of the service. The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. This enables her to take effective action when required.

The manager and staff act as advocates for the children to ensure that their needs are met. When they feel that professionals are not acting in the child's best interest or if there are documents which are outstanding, this is challenged by the manager and review meetings requested where needed.

There is a consistent and experienced staff team, most are qualified and trained in mandatory subjects. However, some staff have not completed all required training and there are some shortfalls in training to meet the children's individual needs, such as eating disorders and missing from care.

Team meetings are held regularly and are well attended by the team. These are used as development opportunities for staff and as a session to share information with the team. However, one of the meeting minutes sampled used language which is stigmatising and not helpful for children.

The manager has recruited new members of staff which has reduced the need for agency staff. This has created consistency for the children. Staff receive regular, practice related supervisions and the manager has good oversight of individuals and the team as a whole, this supports development of the workforce.

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 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)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff have completed training to meet the children's individual needs.	4 January 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's homes is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of their children, and is a homely, domestic environment. Notice boards in the kitchen give an institutionalised feel and the provider should consider removing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).

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, Second Floor, Queensway,
Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Thomas Cappleman

Registered manager: Megan Wells

Inspectors

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector
Michelle Greenhalgh, Social Care Inspector

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