

SC020594

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children. It offers a 12-week programme to children who are in crisis. The programme includes children engaging in activities, staying in temporary accommodation and camping. Ofsted does not inspect all accommodations used. However, the company is required to carry out its own risk assessments for each.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 July 2019

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **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: 12 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/12/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
05/07/2017	Full	Good
12/12/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; and if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (b)(c))	31/08/2019
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— 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; and understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(ii)(iii))	31/10/2019
The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority.	30/09/2019

(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(b)(iii)) This specifically relates to completing an end of placement review report that identifies children's future support needs and sharing this report with relevant parties.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development; and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to: ■ providing staff with regular, good-quality supervision in keeping with their supervision contracts ■ providing staff with training on gangs and county lines.	31/08/2019

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff have the equipment to support them to maintain good-quality records.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff build excellent, trusting relationships with children quickly. They make them feel safe and give them the time to recover a sense of themselves and gradually rebuild confidence and self-belief.

Skilled, qualified staff introduce children to a range of outdoor activities such as canoeing, bodyboarding, climbing and fishing. These tasks require children to focus, listen to instructions and be part of a team. As a result, children are proud of their achievements, learn new skills and experience adrenaline and risk in the form of planned and age-appropriate activities.

Children are at ease with staff and enjoy spending time with them. This enables staff to gather a wealth of information and data about each child. This is shared in regular reports and meetings with professionals throughout a child's stay. However, the conclusions drawn when completing the end of placement review report could be developed further. This would help relevant parties, such as courts, social workers and virtual headteachers, to make future decisions or find future placements.

Staff skilfully support children to begin to re-engage with learning. Throughout the 12-week assessment period, all children complete educational qualifications alongside activities and life skills. In most cases, virtual headteachers are involved throughout the placement. Children might be maintained on a school roll or have a tutor. However, this does not happen in every case. In these incidents, the registered manager does not always challenge the child's placing authority effectively. Barriers to learning, educational progress and future needs are also not well represented in the end of placement review.

The two houses on-site are in the process of being refurbished. Work completed so far is to a good standard and helps to ensure that each child feels relaxed, warm and comfortable. However, some areas, such as the sitting room in the cottage and staff sleep-in rooms would benefit from some more work. Consideration is also being given to making both houses self-contained. Currently, the cottage doesn't have a kitchen and the main house doesn't have a sitting room. Consequently, children and staff have to cross between buildings to access these facilities.

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

Vigilant staff keep children safe and help them to understand how to keep themselves safe. Children's previous high-risk behaviours, such as violence towards others, police involvement, going missing, or involvement in gangs or county lines, stop or significantly reduce.

Staff are very skilled at calmly managing challenging incidents. For example, if a child goes missing they take quick action to try to locate them. When necessary, staff work closely with social workers, parents and police to return children safely to the home. All children receive return home interviews. Staff use these to identify reasons why a child is unsettled and proactively advocate for children when required.

All staff have good knowledge and understanding of risk. They are skilled at planning complex shifts, outdoor pursuits activities and the social interactions of children. They successfully minimise risks, while promoting a wide range of opportunities for children to succeed and excel. For example, one young person recently fundraised and successfully completed the Three Peaks Challenge.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and staff are child-focused and passionate about the service. They are aspirational for children. They ensure that children make good progress which supports them to successfully move on to the next stage of their life.

The registered manager knows the service well and continues to make improvements to the service that drive up standards for staff and children. For example, they have successfully introduced a new electronic recording system that staff can use remotely. This has improved the timeliness of reports and managers' ability to quickly review them and collate useful information. However, staff are currently having to write these reports on mobile phones. This is cumbersome and time-consuming for staff.

Staff feel very well supported by managers and colleagues. A significant improvement has been made to the timeliness and quality of recordings of staff supervisions. However, more work needs to be undertaken to ensure that 100% of staff receive good-quality supervision every cycle. A lack of regular supervision, particularly for new staff and the senior management team, reduces opportunities for staff to learn, develop and communicate. For all staff, these opportunities are significant because they undertake intense, isolated work away from the main home for long periods with two staff members supporting one child.

Staff attend a programme of mandatory training, but this does not include courses on gangs and county lines. This shortfall has had no direct negative impact on children because staff have some knowledge. Managers are in the process of addressing this shortfall.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC020594

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Matthew Mills

Registered manager: Neil Harcourt-Poole

Inspectors

Dawn Bennett, social care inspector
Jo Stephenson, social care inspector

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