

SC020594

Keys Education Limited

Monitoring visit

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 accommodation used. However, the provider is required to carry out its own risk assessments for each accommodation.

Inspection date: 10 March 2021

This monitoring visit

Assurance visits have been suspended during the third national lockdown in response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Instead, Ofsted is undertaking monitoring inspections when needed. This monitoring inspection has been undertaken to monitor children's welfare and safety at the home. This was following concerns raised in the independent visitor's monthly report to Ofsted that children were not appropriately safeguarded. The visitor commented on the occurrence of serious incidents involving children, which the provider had not notified to Ofsted. The inspector went to the home to undertake this visit.

The home has continued to operate during periods of national lockdown and offer care to children experiencing crisis. Although access to outward bound activities has been limited due to travel restrictions and activity centres being closed, the staff have adapted well. They make good use of local amenities to engage children in constructive activities, as well as helping children to learn a range of self-help and independence skills, for which children receive in-house accreditation. This has enabled children to receive good support during a difficult time in their lives. One child is coming to the end of his stay in the home. He has made significant progress and has a planned move to a leaving care service.

Managers in the home take effective action to safeguard children when allegations are made or a serious incident occurs. However, managers do not always notify Ofsted of these. For example, one child made an allegation against a member of staff to the police. Although appropriately investigated, a notification was not made to the regulator. This was a previous shortfall at the interim inspection in March 2020. As a result, this requirement will be repeated.

When children display behaviour that places themselves and others at risk, staff physically intervene to keep the child and others safe. However, records of physical intervention are poor. In one instance, a record of physical intervention indicated that a child had suffered an injury, but no medical treatment was offered. In addition, it is not clear that children are always given the opportunity to talk to someone after an incident to understand their own views about what happened. When children and staff are spoken to, this is not done in a timely way. Poor recording of physical intervention incidents and a lack of effective debriefs mean that it is not always clear that restraint practice is safe and proportionate. This means that children are not being helped to explore, understand and resolve their feelings about what happened. In addition, they are not helped to understand how they can reduce the likelihood of such incidents happening again.

Improvements to the main home environment have been made. Children living in a cottage adjacent to the main building now have access to a kitchen area. However, children's bedrooms are not always kept in a tidy state. While the manager acted swiftly to address this during this monitoring visit, this observation shows a lack of monitoring and support to help children value and look after their own space and themselves.

The manager uses some monitoring systems to oversee the service and undertakes regular audits to review children's care and progress. However, this does not identify all areas for development. For example, this monitoring activity has not helped to identify shortfalls in recording, that serious incident notifications are not sent to Ofsted and that not all areas of the home environment are well maintained. Furthermore, the manager does not seek children's opinions and views about their experience of living at the home to inform the home's future development. In addition, the manager has not completed and submitted the quality of care review report to Ofsted within the timescale set out in regulation. This was a shortfall from the interim inspection in March 2020 and this requirement is also repeated.

Children told the inspector that they feel safe at the home. They have good relationships with staff and each other. They described the activities they take part in, their access to food budgets and the positive support they receive. One child told the inspector, 'Staff are always there for you if you need to talk things through.' Feedback from children's social workers commented on the positive progress children make and the good communication from staff.

A requirement raised at the last inspection has been addressed. The manager now has an effective system in place to monitor staff supervision. Due to the nature of

the service, which is set across a number of sites and involves staff working at different times on different days, the manager has reviewed and revised the supervision arrangements. This was a shortfall at the previous visit. As a result, staff now have appropriate line-manager oversight and the opportunity to reflect on their work practice and professional development.

Children's moves into the home are well planned by staff. Careful matching with other children is considered, taking into account important factors such as risk, age and interests. As a result, children's experiences of moving into the home are positive. Due to the home accepting children in crisis and in an emergency, some children arrive with few belongings or little luggage. Staff ensure that children are provided with a welcome pack and appropriate clothing so that they have what they need. When children leave, the manager ensures that the children have suitable luggage to move on with. This is important because it helps children to feel valued, knowing that people have taken the time to make sure that they have their own luggage and that their clothes and belongings are packed well.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/07/2019	Full	Good
12/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/12/2017	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
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This relates to ensuring that, when an injury is sustained in an intervention, appropriate first-aid treatment is offered, and that children and staff are spoken to about the intervention within timescales.	8 April 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;	8 April 2021

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b)) This relates to ensuring that incidents involving allegations and police involvement are notified to Ofsted.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— Supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and	8 May 2021

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

This relates to including children's opinions on the home and ensuring that the report is submitted within timescales.

Recommendation

- The registered person should recognise that many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context. Homes must also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. This relates to ensuring that children's bedrooms are kept to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC020594

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Education Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Maybrook House, Queensway,
Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Matthew Mills

Registered manager: Neil Harcourt-Poole

Inspector

James Tallis, Social Care Inspector

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