

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021, is suitably experienced and holds the level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive experiences while living in this home. A motivated and dedicated staff team provides children with a supportive and nurturing environment. Children told the inspectors that they like living at the home. One child shared that the home had provided him with new experiences, had changed his outlook on life and that he now aspires to work as a carpenter.

Many of the children have been out of education for some time. To support children while they wait for an education placement, staff help children to complete assessments for qualifications and arrange work experience. As a result, children see education and learning as a positive.

Children benefit from a range of activities that offer them new opportunities and enhance their social experiences. These include rock climbing, camping, paddleboarding and fishing. Children participated in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and one child was supported by staff to complete a 5k fundraising run. He raised one thousand pounds for Cancer Research. This means that children are having fun and making long-lasting memories.

Children's health needs are met. Children are registered at local services and supported to attend routine medical appointments. This helps to promote children's health and well-being.

Children are encouraged to spend time with loved ones. Parents are pleased with the care that their children are given. This helps to prepare a support network for children when they leave the home.

When required, staff seek support and guidance from external professionals. One social worker told the inspector: 'Communication is good, there is lots of information-sharing and staff provide [the child] with the opportunity to change things in his future.' This supports the well-being of children living in the home and enhances the care provided.

The home is furnished and decorated to a good standard. There are plans for additional refurbishment work and for more photos of the children enjoying activities to be added. The environment encourages children to feel comfortable.

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

Managers ensure that children are safeguarded. The manager completes thorough investigations into staff practice and shares information with children's local authorities and the local authority designated officer. Furthermore, when appropriate, the manager ensures that children are provided with an investigation outcome which helps children to feel valued and listened to.

Incidents of physical intervention are used to keep everyone safe. Staff ensure that children are supported with a debrief session following an incident and that appropriate professionals are informed. This informs the manager's oversight of the use physical interventions.

Incidents of children going missing are rare and staff respond to incidents appropriately. Staff record the steps that they have taken to locate children. When children return, staff are thoughtful of children's needs, ensuring that they are provided with warm food and the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings. This ensures that children feel supported and helps the manager to gain information to reduce future risks.

Staff recognise that children are vulnerable and require high levels of supervision to stay safe. Staff discuss risks with children on a frequent basis through key-working sessions and detailed risk-reduction plans. Furthermore, one child has received specialist support to explore the risk related to exploitation. This increases the safety of children and helps them to prepare for their next placement and recognise risk.

Recruitment processes are thorough and staff who are recruited to work in the home are subject to all necessary checks. This helps to ensure that children receive care from adults who have been appropriately vetted.

Children live in a physically safe environment. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks to ensure the safety of the home. The manager has a location risk assessment. However, the manager has failed to consider criminal activity in the local area, and the suitability of the activity accommodation. In addition, the manager has not obtained the views of external agencies. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that risks posed to children are fully assessed.

Children's risks are understood by staff. However, children's written risk assessments to manage and reduce risk are not clear and do not consider all relevant information. For example, one child's impact assessment failed to consider that he had restrictions enforced by a deprivation of liberty order. In addition, another child's missing-from-care risk assessment contained information about another child. This could lead to inconsistencies in staff practice and may compromise children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There is a suitably qualified manager in post. The manager is enthusiastic about the service and is child focused. However, the manager has not always used monitoring systems effectively to oversee the quality of care children receive. This has resulted in some shortfalls in staff practice.

The manager has not ensured that the storage of medication is safe. For example, when children are staying away from the home, the expectation is that staff re-

dispense the medication into different packaging. This process is not in line with the company's medication policy. While this has not had any serious consequences thus far, it has the potential to do so.

The manager does not have a suitable workforce development plan. There is no clear plan about the staff structure, supervision arrangements and time scales for staff inductions. Consequently, expectations for staff are not clear.

There are times where children have stayed longer than the advised placement time. The manager has recognised that this is not appropriate. However, there are limited systems in place to continually review the moving-on plans with children's placing authorities and to ensure that children do not stay longer than the stated duration. This does not ensure that children have planned and gradual moves out of the home.

The manager ensures that the accommodation is used for its intended use. The manager and deputy managers complete unannounced visits to each activity accommodation to assess its suitability and to spend time with children and staff. When shortfalls with the accommodation are identified, the manager responds swiftly. However, during the inspection, staff informed inspectors that there are times when staff have to sleep on sofas due to there not being enough bedrooms. The manager has failed to consider the impact that this may have on the experiences of staff and children who may want to access these areas. This does not ensure that staff are provided with suitable space to rest.

The manager has not always ensured that children's case records contain up-to-date and accurate information. As a result, staff do not always have the information they need to undertake their roles effectively.

The registered manager has completed a six-monthly quality of care review. However, the contents of the report fail to consider the views of children and their families. This limits the manager's ability to reach a comprehensive judgement about the effectiveness of the arrangements for caring for and protecting children.

The current staff team is stable. Staff say that they enjoy working at the home and feel supported and valued. Staff receive regular supervisions and have received an annual appraisal. When practice falls short of the standards expected by the manager, this is addressed in supervision, with a clear plan put in place to review performance. This ensures that staff are reflecting on practice and helps to develop the quality of care.

The manager understands the importance of a skilled workforce. Since the last inspection, the manager has ensured that all staff are up to date with mandatory training. In addition, training has been sourced to help the staff understand the specific needs of children and to ensure that they are competent when completing adventurous activities. This supports continuous professional development and ensures that staff can meet children's needs.

The registered manager has a good understanding of the areas for development of the home. Since the last inspection, the registered manager has developed a new monitoring system which includes weekly and monthly audits. Following the inspection, the manager shared that she would be further updating this document. The effectiveness of this new practice will be considered at the next inspection.

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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the manager should ensure that each child has a risk assessment which provides staff with strategies to follow to keep children safe and that staff implement the guidance in these risk assessments. In addition, impact assessment should consider all risks presented by the child and provide clear guidance for staff in responding to risk and meeting the child's needs.	10 November 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and 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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii))	10 November 2022

In particular, the manager should create and implement systems to continually review the child's placement so that the child does not remain beyond the agreed period as set out in the statement of purpose.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that medication is stored safely.	10 November 2022
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; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. 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)(c) (5)) The specifically relates to the manager ensuring that there are systems in place to gain feedback and that this is considered.	10 November 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the design of the home can provide staff that sleep in the home overnight with appropriate accommodation and facilities to do so. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.26)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1. The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff, including the home's manager. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that all children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the review of the location includes the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph)

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: SC020594

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Agata Dokszeicz

Registered manager: Samantha Orr

Inspectors

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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