

SC020606

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. The home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager is experienced and appropriately qualified.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 20 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/07/2021	Full	Good
11/12/2019	Full	Good
20/11/2018	Full	Good
18/12/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff are providing creative, nurturing individual care for the children, which is enhanced by joint work with a therapy team. Staff work closely with a therapist from this team, who is linked directly to the home. They demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the children's social, emotional and physical needs. As a result, the children are engaging with staff and other adults and successfully improving their resilience, emotional health, well-being and independence.

Children's lives are being enhanced by a staff team who are aspirational and ambitious for them and are proudly supporting them to attain positive outcomes.

Before a child comes to live at the home, the registered manager completes a detailed risk assessment to assess their suitability. This assessment considers reports and discussions with parents, professionals, staff and the children. The process of finding and supporting the right child to move into the home is also informed by the registered manager critically reviewing previous placements. For example, children who recently moved into the home had the opportunity to visit and have tea with the children already living there. One child also went shopping with staff on several occasions to buy items for their bedroom, so that it was ready for when they moved in. This practice supports the existing children to be reassured and feel listened to, and the new children to settle quickly.

Staff inspire the children to understand how important education is for their future. Staff have advocated and supported a change of school for one child, who is now making good progress and is proudly maintaining 100% attendance. Another child, who has now moved on from the home, achieved several A*-equivalent GCSE grades and is now studying A levels and hopes to go to university. As well as supporting mainstream education, staff find creative and innovative ways to expand the children's education at home and through off-site activities.

Staff take time to listen and get to know the children well. This helps the children to form positive relationships with staff and to develop an improved sense of self. For example, the children are helping to prepare meals and are eating healthily. They are engaging with other professionals outside the home, such as therapists. They are active members of clubs and groups. One child is a member of a football club, attending regular training sessions. All children went away on holiday last summer.

This caring ethos supports the children to make excellent progress in many areas of their lives and develops lifelong skills and interests that build their self-esteem and sense of identity. One example of this involves a child who has now moved on. During their time at the home, they were supported to explore their sexuality. This meant they found the confidence to express their individuality. This is well captured in their case file and memory book, and was clear in conversations with them during inspection.

When appropriate, staff work closely with the children's family members to help them maintain positive relationships with their children. Feedback highlighted this and praised staff and their commitment to keeping family members well informed and updated. It is also evident that the registered manager and staff have a good overview of each child's lived experience and their journey into care, and consider the impact and consequence of this.

Children successfully leave the home in line with their local authority plans. For example, one child returned to live with a foster family, while another moved into supported lodgings. Staff are exceptionally skilled at promoting age-appropriate independence. This means there is less reliance on skills being learned through semi-independence and independence programmes. However, these are still used to support children to learn the final skills they need when moving out of the home, for example, managing budgets and shopping and cooking independently. Having these skills ensures that the children successfully progress to their next stages in life.

The home is warm and welcoming. It is beautifully decorated and maintained. The registered manager and staff continue to develop the home environment, with the input of the children. The children have also been part of developing the welcome guide for new children coming to live in the home. They are proud of the home and personalise their bedrooms to their own tastes. There are photos displayed around the home of children past and present, and staff maintain contact with children who have moved on. Staff also take real ownership of the home. One member of staff, who has always taken a lead on decorating the home for Christmas, came in from her maternity leave and used a 'keeping in touch day' to decorate the house for Christmas with the children. This attention to detail ensures that the children develop a real sense of belonging and pride in their home.

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

The registered manager ensures that children are safeguarded. When necessary, she makes prompt referrals to the local authority designated officer and appropriate partnership procedures are followed. The registered manager and staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures through induction, training and supervisions. This ensures that staff practice is based on an established safeguarding culture, where the children are helped to understand how to protect themselves, feel listened to and respected, and are confident that their views matter.

Staff have a clear understanding of the risks that the children face. Children's risk assessments are accurate and regularly updated. This ensures that staff are clear about the measures that they need to adopt to safeguard the children and that risks are significantly reduced.

The staff are sensitive in supporting the children to live together. They encourage the children to discuss the impact that their behaviour can have on each other, in children's house meetings and combined key-working sessions. The registered

manager and staff, in collaboration with the therapist, successfully discuss and look beyond the children's presenting behaviours. Staff use this understanding effectively to support the children to resolve incidents and, as a result, the number of incidents and the use of negative consequences are currently low. There have been no restraints or missing-from-care incidents.

Children build trusting, respectful relationships with the staff, which enables staff to have challenging conversations with the children. Staff follow a parenting model that promotes unconditional regard. They celebrate children's achievements and use rewards to good effect. They also recognise that the children will at times make mistakes and unwise decisions. They are non-judgemental in their approach and use a wide range of resources developed with the therapist to support change and inform future choices. For example, staff sit with individual children to watch and discuss specific documentaries or to complete online learning courses.

Staff skilfully balance risk with the aspiration that the children will become well-informed independent adults. For example, one child is working towards being able to cycle to school, by learning about bicycle safety and gradually increasing the time and distance he is allowed to go out in the local community without the supervision of staff. Planned and risk-assessed free time is based on the interests of the individual children and increased according to their maturity. As a result, the children expand their social circles, explore their local community and learn the importance of keeping themselves safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager and deputy manager are skilled and experienced. They lead by example. They both know the children well and have an excellent understanding of the home and staff teams' strengths and areas for development. The company has invested in providing training and arranging attendance at conferences for the registered manager and the deputy manager. This is positive and improves their skills and knowledge. It also provides them with opportunities to share practice with other managers and bring information back to the home's staff team.

This home has had a very stable and experienced staff team. Recent staff changes have been well managed and there is a clear plan in place to ensure all staff vacancies will be filled by permanent staff by early 2023. This promotes consistency and continuity of care for the children and provides them with a stable home environment.

The members of the staff team have a clear understanding of the therapeutic theories and research they are using to enable children to progress. Staff feel valued because the managers support the right environment for practice to be developed. Staff receive regular supervision sessions and training, focused on their practice and the needs of the children. As a result, each staff member can reflect on their practice and develop their skills.

The managers and staff are committed to partnership working with other professionals and agencies, such as social workers and schools. Positive feedback was obtained during inspection and the staff praised for their collaborative work. Furthermore, all feedback mentioned the individual care provided to each child and exceptional communication with partner agencies, professionals and family members.

The registered manager and staff team have excellent knowledge of the therapy models applied in the home and across the company. These models are well embedded through induction, training, team meetings and meetings with the therapy team, and evidenced in practice. Furthermore, the use of such models is tailored to suit the individual needs of the children.

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: SC020606

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

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

Responsible individual: David Carser

Registered managers: Sally Hemsley

Inspectors

Dawn Bennett, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Stacie Sharpe, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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