

SC024808

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. It is registered to provide care for up to four children aged between seven and 18 years who have had adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The registered manager holds their level 5 qualification in leadership and management and registered with Ofsted in April 2023.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 August 2023

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	good
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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: 29 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/11/2022	Full	Good
15/09/2021	Full	Good
29/10/2019	Full	Good
27/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The same three children continue to live in this home and have done so for over a year. Children love living at this home. One child told the inspector, 'It's truly amazing here and I want to stay here forever,' and another child rated the home as 10 out of 10. All children talked about the excellent support they receive from staff and how they had been supported to 'be a better person'.

Children living in this home are cared for by a highly committed staff team that is child-centred and gives children nurturing and loving care. As result, children who previously were not progressing as well as they could have been are now thriving and making excellent progress. For example, two children who previously did not attend school are now doing so, and despite missing a lot of their time in education, they are excelling. One child has a college placement and is looking forward to progressing towards their chosen career. Another child has struggled to attend school full time. Staff have advocated for the child and have challenged other professionals, which has helped to ensure that any barriers to learning are broken down.

A social worker told the inspector, 'They [staff] are excellent at including myself and other appropriate agencies, such as school, so that we can maintain a holistic and consistent approach and make this clear to the child.'

Staff know the children extremely well, and they are passionate about providing the best possible care. Staff are creative and go out of their way to make sure that children have positive experiences. For example, one child recently enjoyed their school prom. All staff came in on their days off and enjoyed a meal with the child and their family, and staff then arrived at the school to wave to her as she arrived in a special car. This made the child feel very loved and supported. When telling the inspector about the experience, her face lit up with pride.

The nurturing and supportive approach of staff helps children to grow and develop. Staff have supported children who previously did not like leaving their bedroom and were socially isolated as they did not go out. Children now enjoy spending time with staff and their peers, have joined the gym and go by themselves and have friends over to enjoy barbecues. They now enjoy hobbies such as playing the guitar and have joined a rugby team. As a result, children's mental well-being and overall health have improved, along with them gaining confidence and self-esteem.

Children are helped by staff to be as independent as possible. Staff promote independence by not seeing any challenges as a barrier and by finding solutions. For example, one child struggled to go to school and leave the house, and staff worked tirelessly with the child and helped them take small but important steps until they were able to travel to school alone using public transport. The child's confidence has

developed so much that they now have a part-time job. Because of the excellent support children receive, they are better prepared for the next stages of their lives.

Family, staff and children all told the inspector that this is a 'home from home'. All children take it in turns to cook for the household. The inspector was able to stay for two meals, and a child made a fabulous pasta dish without any support from the staff team. It is an expectation that everyone sits and eats together at the table and shares their thoughts and feelings from the day. This helps to create a family environment and supports children to develop their social skills.

The manager has worked hard to make ongoing improvements to the home. It is welcoming, and the personalities of those that live there really shine through. Children's pictures and awards are celebrated and are on display. Children are proud of their home, and they help to clean, decorate and maintain it.

Children have taken part in a wide range of activities, such as trips to the beach and trampoline park, and they have enjoyed going on holiday. One child was extremely excited as he was going to attend Liverpool's Anfield Football Stadium the next day. This is something he has wanted to do for some time.

A grandparent told the inspector that her granddaughter is 'so settled; her progress is 100%. She wouldn't do anything; she was running away and was not at school. Now she catches the bus to school and is just herself and a lot happier.'

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

Staff know the children extremely well and follow plans that keep children safe. Staff use key-work session discussions to help children understand potential dangers and learn more about the world. Individualism is celebrated and embraced in the home. Children have enjoyed taking part in a number of activities, from celebrating Pride to completing a mud fun run. As a result, children learn more about the world, how to keep safe and how to respect each other.

Staff's knowledge of children means that they can identify the subtle cues that tell them children are becoming more anxious. They use this knowledge and skills to defuse potential incidents. For example, children no longer go missing from home or self-harm, and nor do their emotions escalate to a point where staff have had to intervene to keep them safe. This is because children feel safe, supported and listened to. They understand and respect the boundaries in the home, understand why they are necessary and told the inspector that they would not change them.

A child told the inspector, 'I didn't used to want to be here and would run away. I can talk about things now and have become a better person, and that's because of the staff team here.'

Staff are trained and qualified within the necessary timescale. They have a range of

training and ongoing discussion with the home's clinical team to keep them upskilled. Although children no longer go missing from home or make allegations, staff are clear about what actions they need to take should these events happen.

Staff use a therapeutic model of care. This focuses on consistency but also on celebrating the positives and working through any challenges together. Staff use a system called 'my highlights'. This helps children to recognise all their achievements, from showing acts of kindness to winning prizes for their talented writing abilities.

All staff have the necessary checks to help ensure that they are safe to work with children. However, when historical issues are raised as part of recruitment checks, not enough details are provided to show how these have been understood and taken into account when making the decision to recruit staff affected. Steps have been taken to ensure that this worker is not a risk to children, but a recommendation has been made to help improve practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is aspirational, dedicated and committed to ensuring that children get the best possible care. She, her deputy managers and the responsible individual are forward-thinking and have plans for how the home can be further improved. The manager is not afraid to seek advice and guidance from other professionals. As a result, children receive excellent care and are making exceptional progress.

The manager undertakes research, looking for new ideas and ways of working. For example, they work very closely with the home's therapist. She visits the home and works with children and staff. This is driving staff's confidence and skills. She attends team meetings and completes workshops with staff to help them apply theory to practice. She told the inspector that staff are eager to learn and that they seek advice as they want to do the best job possible.

When the manager feels that other professionals are not acting quickly enough in conducting assessments needed for children, she challenges this and escalates her concerns. As a result, a child now has an education, health and care plan in place, which will help to ensure that the child gets the right educational support.

Staff spoken to say they feel very well supported by the manager. They love working in this home. They state that the manager goes above and beyond to support them. She offers additional support should they need it. Staff say that they are encouraged to learn and develop new skills and that they use these skills. Consequently, staff give the best possible care to children.

This home has had a few changes to staffing. Some staff have progressed within the company, and another has been supported to move on when they have not offered the level of care the manager strives to achieve. There is a core group of staff who bring stability, experience and a wealth of knowledge to the team. A small,

consistent group of agency staff are used, some of which are now joining the home as employed staff. Agency staff benefit from an induction before they join and attend team meetings so that they can benefit from the clinical support that the core staff team uses. This helps to ensure that a consistent approach is used with the children. Staff that have progressed within the organisation come and visit and are warmly welcomed by the children. Hugs and cuddles are given, which supports children to feel cared for.

Everyone spoken to was positive about the impact the new manager has had on the home and on the care for the children. They commented that communication is excellent. A social worker told the inspector, 'I have also observed how they support other adults, not only staff, e.g., where they have learned about research and methodology, they have willingly shared this with the network.' A member of staff stated, 'There is never a day at [name of home] where you are not met at the door with a smile, and I personally feel proud to be part of such a loving, caring, supportive and strong team.'

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that the recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC024808

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Gemma Moore

Registered manager: Rebecca Hughes

Inspector

Louise Battersby, Social Care Inspector

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