

SC026991

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company. It provides care for up to four children, aged between five and 18 years of age, who may experience social or emotional difficulties. The provider uses a psychologically informed model of care.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2017.

Three children are currently living at the home. They were spoken to as part of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 March 2022

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
17/03/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/05/2019	Full	Good
16/10/2018	Full	Good
06/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have excellent transitions when they move into or out of the home. Before they move in, staff visit the children, and the children visit the home to prepare them for their move. One social worker said, 'When I visited the home, a child told me all about the home. I have never had this before and it was excellent to hear from a child's perspective.' One child has successfully returned to his parent. This is due to the excellent work that staff did while he lived at the home and the close work with the parent and professionals to secure a smooth transition.

The manager and staff focus on providing a family environment. For example, children are taught to be respectful of each other and to be kind. Staff do things like a good parent would, such as reading the children bedtime stories, comforting them with hugs and celebrating their successes. As a result, the plan is for all the children to return to foster care or home in the future.

Children said that they enjoyed living at the home, that they had fun and that staff looked after them well. One child said, 'The rules are strict but fair. Staff listen to me and give me hugs when I need one.' Another child said, 'If I cannot live at home, this is the best place to be.' This was echoed by three social workers who were very complimentary about the children's care.

The children attend school regularly. Staff understand the importance of education, and they develop effective relationships with education providers. The staff have all the necessary education related documents to support the children's progress. However, some of this information has not been taken over to the children's education plans, such as their attendance and academic levels. Therefore, staff do not have clear information on how they can enhance the children's learning.

The children are in good health. They attend regular check-ups with healthcare services. Two children went for their immunisations on the day of the inspection. This means that they are protected from known diseases. In addition to this, a psychologist attends the monthly staff meetings. She gives staff advice on understanding children's past trauma and how this can affect their behaviour and feelings. She discusses suitable strategies and approaches. The children's behaviour management plans are updated accordingly. As a result, staff work consistently with children.

Children have opportunities on a day-to-day basis to engage in enjoyable and fulfilling activities. Staff recognise and encourage their individual talents and interests. Children take part in a range of activities, such as walking, bike rides, visiting theme parks and playing out with friends. This supports them to develop skills, have fun and build positive friendships.

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

The children said that they are safe at the home. Staff complete regular training in a range of safeguarding topics. As a result, they understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting the children. When serious incidents occur in the house, the staff team is adept at managing them safely.

Arrangements to protect and safeguard children are good. Children feel safe and readily share any concerns or worries with staff. One young person said of the staff, 'I can talk to them about anything.' Another child said, 'I like that I am never alone.' Staff support children's understanding of personal safety through individual key-work sessions. This helps the children to develop their knowledge and understanding and to make safer choices.

Risks to children are quickly identified and acted on. Staff demonstrate that they understand their role in protecting children from harm. Staff contribute to risk assessments and help to formulate plans to reduce risk. However, there is little guidance on the actions for staff to take if an incident were to occur. Similarly, the risk assessments have a risk level score that gives an overall level of risk, such as low, medium or high. Some of these have not been filled in; therefore, it is difficult to see how the overall risk has been assessed. Currently, this has not had an adverse impact on the children's safety, but if it is not addressed, it has the potential to do so. Similarly, the manager has not considered the home's location area report as part of the impact risk assessment. As a result, she has not considered any identified potential risks in the local area and whether these would have any bearing on the suitability of the placement.

High levels of supervision mean that children have not been reported missing from this home. Staff understand what they need to do to de-escalate negative behaviours. This promotes a positive and non-confrontational culture. This, in turn, helps children to develop their own ways of managing conflict in a more constructive manner. Good records are kept if a child needs to be held. Children and staff take part in debrief sessions, so that they can learn from the incident. The manager evaluates all incidents to look for patterns or trends. Therefore, staff practice can be discussed, altered or routines can be changed accordingly.

Children have positive and trusting relationships with the staff in the home. It is clear from the interactions between children and staff that children can talk to staff about important issues. The written records kept in the home and the feedback from the children provide evidence of this.

Children have plenty of space to play together or have time alone. Their bedrooms are homely and welcoming. Children have personalised their rooms to reflect their personalities and preferences

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a suitably qualified manager who has the experience to undertake her role. She is supported by a deputy manager and two senior members of staff. There is a clear management structure. They work together to support one another and complement their skill sets, which has a positive impact on the staff team and the children.

Collectively, members of staff report that they are supportive of one another and are happy to come to work. Staff are positive, focused and enjoy their work, and this helps the children feel confident and relaxed in their company.

There is a balance of new and experienced staff. Half of the staff team have achieved a National Vocational Qualification at level 3. New staff are at different stages of completing a similar qualification. Staff receive training to support their learning, and the manager has a clear system in place to make sure that staff receive mandatory and additional training. Therefore, staff have the skills and knowledge to support children well.

The staff team receives regular supervision that is reflective and is underpinned by development and individual strengths. However, the home's workforce plan does not identify the timescales for supervision. Personal development plans focus on the development of individual staff members. In addition to this, staff have monthly team meetings, and they share examples of good practice, training and development information to aid their learning. As a result, staff say that they are supported, valued and motivated.

Children's case records are generally good and contain relevant information. This means that staff have all the information that they need to plan effectively for the children in their care. However, some staff have not signed some records, such as the children's risk assessments. This does not show that staff are aware of any changes or updates about the child's care.

The manager works positively with external professionals to help ensure that children receive effective care and support. In circumstances when external services fall short, the manager can challenge them and advocate for the children.

Monitoring and review systems at the home help the manager to identify the home's strengths and weaknesses. The manager is then able to alter her practice when necessary to make improvements that are in the best interests of the children.

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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This is specifically in relation to ensuring that children's risk assessments identify the actions that staff should take in the event of an incident. Further to this, ensure that the location assessment report is used when considering referrals to the home, to ensure the area is safe for them.	31 July 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are aware of and understand each child's education targets and academic level. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 27, paragraph 5.11)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). Specifically, that the timescales for supervision are clearly recorded in the workforce plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that records kept in the children's home are signed and dated by the author. Further to this, that staff sign the children's records. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: SC026991

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Mark Dickinson

Registered manager: Wendy Birtwistle

Inspectors

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Nicola Shaw, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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