

SC034944

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 one of a number owned and managed by a private organisation. The home specialises in caring for children with attachment difficulties who may have experienced multiple placement breakdowns. Children are of primary school age on admission. The home is registered to care for four children.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted on 1 February 2017.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 October 2019

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: 6 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2018	Full	Outstanding
05/09/2017	Full	Good
02/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/09/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Specifically, staff should have access to training related to the needs of individual children.

- Ensure that all staff in a care role have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- Ensure that staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care and that everyone working at the home understands their roles and responsibilities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

Specifically, all staff should record the names of children involved in fire drills in the home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home is warm and welcoming. It resembles a family home. Staff support children to choose the colour and design of their bedrooms. Children are proud of their rooms and help keep them tidy. The communal areas in the home are bright and attractive spaces, with plenty of toys and games. Both the bathrooms in the home have been replaced since the last inspection, and they are now light and modern spaces. Children want to spend their time in this welcoming environment.

Children benefit from living in a structured setting, with clear boundaries and routines. Staff use consistent therapeutic terminology, and children know what is expected of them. Children enjoy good relationships with staff and they want to spend time with staff. The staff team is largely stable, although additional staff have been recruited to meet the need for higher staffing levels to support one resident. This consistency helps children develop trusting relationships.

Two children have recently moved on from the home to live with foster carers, after living in the home for a number of years. This is a tremendous outcome for them. The transition was carefully planned to ensure that both young people were ready for this move. They both remain in touch with staff, demonstrating the significance of these

relationships.

Children are making excellent progress with their education and with their social and emotional development. Most children attend the organisation's school, and all children have a 100% attendance, which is commendable. Staff read regularly with children, and children enjoy reading on their own. One child's school report commented on the exceptional progress he had made with his spelling. Reading regularly will have supported this.

Children have access to the organisation's therapist, and staff are able to seek advice and guidance from therapists on a regular basis. The registered manager has also sought support from an in-house clinical psychologist, who has provided helpful advice regarding behavioural support strategies for one child who is currently struggling to manage his behaviour. The registered manager is working alongside the local authority social worker to instigate further assessments, and this interim advice has helped to ensure that staff are best able to provide safe and consistent care. Staff remain resilient and committed despite daily challenges.

Staff support and encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyles. They provide children with healthy well-balanced meals and encourage them to engage in regular exercise. Children are also involved in activities in the community. All children learn to swim when they live here and most attend for lessons, as well as enjoying swimming as a leisure activity. Children also enjoy horse-riding and football and go to cubs and scouts. This helps build children's confidence and self-esteem. It also allows them the opportunity to make friendships outside the home.

Staff support children to value difference. The staff team is diverse in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. All the children recently attended the Asian wedding of one staff member, which helped them to learn about the culture and customs. They were impeccably behaved and enjoyed this experience.

Staff value the importance of children maintaining regular contact with their families. Detailed contact agreements and risk assessments are in place if required. Staff facilitate a range of contact arrangements and maintain positive relationships with family members, ensuring that these important relationships are maintained. Staff support each child to send a card and photograph on a monthly basis to those who are special to them. Family members are very appreciative of these. One grandparent commented in feedback to the home, 'Thanks for the lovely letters and the photos. These show a remarkable improvement. Thank you.'

Social workers spoke highly of the home and the care that children receive. One commented, 'My child receives incredibly good care. He has really great relationships with staff. I have no concerns at all about the home.' Another said, 'I like how the home is therapeutic and made as homely as possible.'

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

Staff ensure that the home is a safe place in which to live. Children feel safe and secure here, trusting those who care for them. They know how to make a complaint and have easy access to the registered manager, should they be unhappy about anything. They know that she will listen to their concerns.

The registered manager and staff have a clear understanding of the individual risks that children face and how best to manage these. Regular safeguarding training equips staff with the knowledge and skills to ensure that children are safeguarded. Serious safeguarding incidents are rare. However, while living here, children have disclosed serious historic abuse, demonstrating that they feel safe enough to do so.

Good-quality behaviour management plans highlight the children's individual needs. These indicate likely trigger points and include clear strategies to use to de-escalate these behaviours quickly and effectively. However, incidents of physical intervention have increased over recent months, particularly for one child who has struggled with the departure of two other children and the uncertainty about who will be moving into the home. Good-quality recording supports the need for staff to intervene, and they do so safely. The manager completes debriefs with everyone involved, enabling time for reflection and to review future practice. However, staff would benefit from additional training to meet the needs of children currently in placement. This includes training on autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and self-injurious behaviour. Additional information about these issues may help staff make further adjustments to behaviour support plans to better support children.

Sanctions are rarely used and only given following a period of reflection, in order for the child to make amends. Staff use praise and rewards to promote positive behaviour. Staff also celebrate children's achievements.

High levels of staff supervision ensure that children are safe in their home and in the community. There has been one incident of missing since the last inspection, when a child rode off on his bicycle, following a disagreement with staff. The child became confused about his location and was offered help by a member of the public. Since this incident, staff have made sure that all children know the address and telephone number of the home, and they complete work with children about 'stranger danger'.

Routine health and safety checks in the home ensure that children's safety and well-being are paramount. Staff carry out regular fire drills to ensure that the premises are safe and young people are able to respond in an emergency. Fire drills are also undertaken when a new young person moves into the home. However, staff do not always record which children have been involved in these evacuations, making it difficult to ensure that all children have had recent experience of evacuating the home in an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has worked in this home for three years. She completed her level 5 management qualification in February 2018. She is an experienced and knowledgeable practitioner, having worked as a deputy manager in another of the organisation's homes for many years. She remains passionate about achieving good outcomes for children and advocates strongly for them. She leads by example, and staff value this approach.

Staff spoke positively about the ethos of the home and their support from managers. Staff receive regular supervision and an annual performance appraisal. The organisation supports staff development. The deputy manager is currently completing her level 5 qualification. The majority of staff either have a level 3 qualification or are working towards this. However, one member of staff has worked in the home for over two years and has still to complete this essential qualification. This is in part due to a change in training provider outside of his control, and clear timescales for completion have been agreed with managers. However, a recommendation is made to ensure that this is indeed prioritised.

Staff meetings are regular and can involve consultation with therapists. This ensures that staff are up to date regarding any current issues. Staff have high aspirations for the children living in the home. They reported that they like working here and they ensure that the environment is homely and warm. One staff member commented, as part of the Ofsted annual survey, 'There is very much a family feeling about the home, with all the staff inclusive of the manager being very invested in the future of the children in our care.'

The registered manager knows the children exceptionally well and is involved in their day-to-day care. Children will approach her without hesitation, sometimes to ask for a hug. This was evident during the inspection. The manager recognises the significance of children's views, as this is their home. As well as regular children's meetings in which children talk freely, the manager has regular 'open office' sessions with children on their own. They enjoy a snack and a drink and have the opportunity for one-to-one time with the manager. This ensures that children feel listened to and they enjoy feeling special.

Managers recognise the need to continuously look for ways to improve staff practice. Their oversight is strong, and records are regularly evaluated. Children receive feedback regarding any suggestions or requests. The manager also makes good use of the external monitoring of the home and is eager to implement any suggestions for improvement.

Staff and managers are highly thought of by other professionals who are involved in the children's daily lives. They commend them for their hard work and the care that they provide for children. One social worker commented in feedback requested by the home, 'Staff, and particularly the manager, are fantastic at communicating with me. They provide a safe and loving home, and my child is happy and content in their care.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC034944

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sylvia Eboigbe

Registered manager: Maureen Gibbons

Inspector

Mandy Williams, social care inspector

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