

SC066115

Registered provider: Keys ACE Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 2025

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: 5 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
18/01/2023	Full	Outstanding
22/03/2022	Full	Good
15/05/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Three children have lived at the home for over four years. Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home and one child has moved out. Staff demonstrate a commitment to supporting children in their transition to new homes. For one child who moved out, staff worked closely with the child and external professionals to identify the most appropriate home, ensuring that their individual needs and preferences were considered and acted upon. Staff maintained a strong relationship with the child after the move, including regular visits, phone calls and spending time personalising their new home with them. This helped to ease the child's worries and contributed to the child's sense of security by helping them to build relationships with unfamiliar staff.

Children benefit from positive, nurturing relationships with staff which are central to their well-being and development. Children live in a warm, supportive environment and enjoy a wide range of activities with staff, including holidays which help broaden their experiences. Staff go the extra mile to make the children feel special and loved, with thoughtful touches such as placing teddy bears reading books on their beds when they return from school. This helps build children's sense of care and belonging. One child, who has previously experienced multiple home moves, has settled exceptionally well in the home. They enjoy trusting and meaningful relationships with staff, which has significantly contributed to their stability and emotional well-being. This consistent support and the individual attention provided by staff have been key factors in the child's positive progress and integration into the home.

Children's voices are actively listened to and valued by staff, with their views being central to decision-making about their care. Weekly meetings provide children with a regular, structured opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and suggestions. These meetings empower children to express themselves and they are confident that their opinions are respected and acted upon. Staff consistently demonstrate a commitment to responding to children's feedback, ensuring that changes are made where possible to improve their experiences. As a result, children have a sense of ownership, contributing to their overall sense of safety, self-worth and involvement in their own care.

Children are thriving in their education. One child is set to take their GCSEs ahead of schedule, demonstrating both academic ability and a strong work ethic. Staff work closely with educational professionals to support children's academic progress. Staff create a positive, nurturing and motivating environment that encourages children to strive for success. Staff closely monitor children's progress, offering individualised support to ensure that children are fully equipped to succeed and reach their full potential.

Children's health needs are consistently met. Comprehensive health plans are in place for each child, providing clear guidance for staff to follow, ensuring a coordinated approach to healthcare. Staff take children to routine and specialist health appointments, ensuring

that they receive necessary medical attention and support. Staff prepare healthy, well-balanced meals and actively encourage physical activities, promoting a healthy lifestyle. This supports children in maintaining their physical health and to learn healthy habits for the future. As a result, children are supported to lead a balanced, healthy lifestyle, contributing positively to their overall well-being and development.

Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the importance of children maintaining relationships and spending time with people who are important to them. Staff support, and when appropriate supervise family time to ensure that these connections are nurtured in a safe environment. Children enjoy regular, meaningful time with family and friends. This supports their sense of self and identity.

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

Staff have the knowledge and skills to keep children safe. Practice is supported by detailed written information about the child from their placing local authority. Children's individual risk assessments and safety plans are detailed, with guidance for staff to follow. Staff undertake research-based direct work with children to develop their knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe. When safeguarding concerns arise, staff consistently follow safeguarding procedures. Staff demonstrate a highly proactive approach to emerging safeguarding concerns, ensuring that any potential risks are quickly identified and addressed. For one child, this included sourcing and funding specialist exploitation support. This provides immediate intervention to equip children with the necessary skills and resilience to prevent future exploitation and safeguarding incidents.

Children's needs are known and understood by staff. Children's care plans are clear and detailed and provide comprehensive guidance for staff to follow, ensuring consistent and effective care. Staff actively involve children in the creation of their care plans, empowering them to have a voice in shaping their own futures. Additionally, children are encouraged to attend multi-agency meetings, where they are given the opportunity to express their views and wishes regarding the care they receive. The manager undertakes regular consultation sessions with children, ensuring that their views are heard and taken into consideration in all aspects of their care.

Staff regularly use rewards, de-escalation techniques and distraction methods to manage children's behaviour. Staff know the children well and can pre-empt behaviours to prevent incidents escalating. Staff implement effective behaviour management techniques identified during regular reviews with the home's therapist. Consequences implemented by staff are proportionate and appropriate to the behaviour displayed. On occasions, children have been physically held by staff as a last resort to protect children from harming themselves or others. The number of occasions when children are held is reducing.

Staff go above and beyond to support children's emotional well-being. For one child experiencing grief and loss, staff helped to create a meaningful and personal memorial

for a family member. This memorial, which includes balloons and written plaques, has been thoughtfully designed to provide the child with a safe, comforting space to return to in the future. Staff demonstrated highly effective planning in ensuring that the child's emotional needs were met during this difficult time. This not only honours the memory of the lost family member but also provides the child with a lasting place of reflection and healing.

On the one occasion that children have gone missing from the home, staff were proactive and professionally curious in their attempts to locate and return the children home safely. Practice is supported by detailed written information about the children from their placing authorities. There are clear safety plans in place with guidance for staff to follow when children go missing from the home. Staff seek to understand the reasons why children go missing from the home in an attempt to reduce the risk of future incidents.

The registered manager demonstrates a strong commitment to safeguarding by ensuring that staff are recruited safely. This includes thorough background checks to verify the suitability of staff to work with children. New staff receive a comprehensive, high-quality induction, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to provide safe, effective care. Additionally, rigorous monitoring of visitors to the premises provides an additional layer of protection for children, ensuring that only authorised visitors have access to the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is highly experienced and knowledgeable, demonstrating a deep understanding of the children in her care and excellent oversight of the home. She knows each child exceptionally well and is fully attuned to their individual needs, ensuring that care is individual and effective. The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development, consistently striving to drive improvement. With a strong commitment to excellence, she challenges the team to continuously raise standards, always seeking better outcomes for the children.

Multi-agency working excellent. Partner agencies and family members say that they are happy with the care provided to children by staff. The manager advocates effectively on children's behalf and shares relevant information to keep professionals and family members well informed of the children's progress. One social worker said: 'The impact has been significant. [Name of child] has been able to settle, and staff are able to meet [name of child's] needs. They are doing an excellent job.' One parent said: 'They are absolutely amazing.'

Staff's learning and development is a priority. Staff have individual development plans that identify key strengths and areas for further development. Staff are provided with a wide range of training, including specific courses to meet the individual needs of children. As a result, staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to promote the safety and welfare of children.

Staff receive regular, good-quality supervision. Staff have plenty of opportunities to discuss and reflect on their care of the child. Staff do quizzes to test their knowledge and are given scenarios to think through and discuss with each other. Any shortfall in practice is raised in supervision and staff are given clear guidance on their tasks to complete.

Staff say they 'love' coming to work and say that they feel supported by their manager. Staff describe the registered manager as being approachable and that they feel valued. One staff member said: 'She's the best manager I've ever had.' When staff are new to the home, the registered manager provides them with an experienced mentor to support their learning. Staff describe the home as 'a family'.

Research-based practice is deeply embedded throughout the home. Staff have a strong understanding of childhood trauma and its impact on children in their care. This knowledge is used to inform and shape their approach, resulting in thoughtful and compassionate care. Staff consistently demonstrate a high level of empathy and understanding. Staff use a lot of warmth, encouragement and humour to get the best out 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: SC066115

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys ACE Limited

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

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Jaime Meller

Inspector

Leanne Carr, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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M1 2WD

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