

SC067561

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. The statement of purpose confirms that the home can provide care for up to two children. At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2020.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 8 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2022	Full	Good
14/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/06/2018	Full	Good
24/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, the same two children continue to live at this home. Both children are very positive about their experiences of living here, and they spoke positively to inspectors about individual adults who care for them. Both children are making progress, and proudly spoke about their achievements since living here. One child is really pleased that he has attended school and has obtained qualifications. The second child showed the inspectors a hidden talent for ice skating that she has found since living at this home. The child skates five times a week, and to support her progress, the home is paying for private lessons.

At this inspection, inspectors found that the home was not suitable enough for children to live in due to extensive refurbishment work taking place. Leaders' and managers' planning and oversight of this work were not thorough enough to assess the impact on children continuing to live in the home at the same time as the work was taking place. During the inspection, the kitchen and bathrooms were out of use. In response to the inspectors' concerns, the responsible individual took immediate action by sourcing alternative accommodation until the building work has been completed.

At the time of this inspection, one child was temporarily not living at the home. Following a review of his care plan the placing authority arranged for him to take part in an independent training programme in preparation for adulthood. For a couple of weeks, the child is living independently in purpose-built accommodation with adult support when required. The child agreed for the inspectors to visit him. He shared that he is enjoying living at the flat and that when he is not sure about something he is getting the support he needs. Staff from the home are also keeping in touch with the child regularly.

In recent months, the children have not been provided with the continuity of care that they usually receive. This is because three full-time permanent staff have left. Children said that on occasions they are looked after and taken out on activities by adults who they do not know well.

Children's care and support plans align with the placing authority aims of placement. However, these documents are extensive, making it harder to find important information easily. Targets included in these plans are too broad, they lack aspiration and do not maximise children's progress. For example, one target for a child is to remain living at the home until they are 18.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

All staff have completed safeguarding training and regularly attend refresher courses. Staff are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities and implement their learning from the training in practice. However, the quality of most written risk assessments does not support direct practice well enough. These documents lack specificity and do not sufficiently align with the perceived risks. Some risk assessments refer to historical information that is not a current concern; others do not reflect the actual current risks sufficiently. Consequently, new and temporary staff are not provided with clear enough information to safeguard the children.

Missing-from-care incidents have reduced significantly. When children do go missing, staff follow missing-from-care protocols effectively. They search for children and involve the police appropriately. However, information for staff about what actions they should take if a child asks to return home in the early hours of the morning does not prioritise their safety or show staff how to return the child at the soonest opportunity.

Safer recruitment practices are maintained. However, despite this good work, interview notes do not show why the candidate has been deemed as suitable or has the skills and experience required to care for children with a range of complex needs.

The manager keeps the home's locality assessment under regular review. The assessment is generalised. The information does not specifically set out the actual hazards in the local area that have the potential to place the current children at risk. The manager agreed to review this document.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Weaknesses identified at this inspection relate to the effectiveness of leaders' and managers' planning and oversight of building works and records. To date, these weaknesses have not had a significant impact on the children but have the potential to do so.

The registered manager has strong relationships with the children. Children speak positively about the manager; they recognise that their progress is important to her and individual staff members. The children shared examples of how the team has helped them to learn and make progress. The manager and team genuinely want the children to realise their potential so they can achieve their aspirations. Children say they feel safe and are understood and well cared for.

The retention and recruitment of staff has been problematic. In response, the registered manager and remaining core staff have worked vacant shifts. Where vacant shifts remain, temporary staff have worked to ensure children's care plan

needs are met. However, rotas are not well maintained, and they do not always reflect who has worked. The responsible individual is aware of the current staffing shortages and has confirmed that employment conditions are being reviewed as well learning from exit interviews.

The registered manager ensures that all staff are compliant with basic mandatory training. In addition, staff are provided with specialist training courses that help them to respond to the children's current known needs. This includes training courses in gang culture, substance misuse and criminal exploitation.

The registered manager ensures that all staff receive regular formal supervision and that team meetings are well attended. Despite this good work, the records of these meetings vary in quality and content. They do not reflect all discussions held, the agreed actions or a compressive review of both children's progress.

The home's development plan is regularly reviewed. However, this document is extensive and not focused on the current areas of development. The plan lacks aspiration about how to enhance children's opportunities and experiences.

Staff feedback has been unanimously positive. They refer to themselves as a team, and they appreciate the support of the manager. They confirmed that they have benefited from training opportunities provided. An independent reviewing officer commented positively about the progress a child has made. He attributed this to the quality of support and care the child has received from the registered manager and care staff. He confirmed that the child's successful transition into adulthood is a result of the team's drive and determination to develop his independent and social skills.

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; and manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(i)(ii)) This particularly refers to simplifying internal care plans and risk assessments to make them easier to read and ensuring they are written in a way that will be helpful to the child.	28 October 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the planned refurbishment of the bathrooms and kitchen are completed within the already identified timescales to provide the children with quality living space throughout the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure risk assessments link cohesively together to inform staff practice. Consideration must also be given to ongoing review of documents to ensure they contain relevant information to provide clarity for the reader. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should monitor and review the patterns and trends of turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, and be able to understand

and, where possible, address any negative trends. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.19)

- The registered person should ensure that best use of information from independent and internal monitoring is made, to ensure continuous improvement. This particularly refers to ensuring that discussions about outcomes from monitoring activities are included in supervision sessions and that the written development plan is formalised to include ideas that the members of the management team have to improve the quality of care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person must ensure that care staff interviews identify how and why the candidates with no residential childcare experience are suitable to work with children who have complex needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision provides evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation. In particular, ensure that formal supervisions and team meetings provide staff members with the opportunity to reflect on their practice individually and as a team. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

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: SC067561

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Gemma Moore

Registered manager: Beverley Page

Inspectors

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector

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