

SC366002

Registered provider: Keys ACE Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home, registered to provide care and support for up to four children.

There is no registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2023

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	inadequate
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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: 22 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2022	Full	Good
02/03/2022	Full	Good
17/12/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/06/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

There are currently three children living in this home. One child has previously experienced frequent unplanned moves. However, this child has settled into this home and started to make good progress. Another child said: 'I'd give the home 9 out of ten.'

Children's health needs are being met. On moving into the home, staff quickly register children with local health services. Staff support children to attend necessary health appointments. This promotes children's health.

Staff support children's education. Most children have good attendance and attainment at school. When children are unable to attend education, staff use creative alternative methods. This ensures that children are still provided with opportunities to learn. Staff advocate for children to ensure that they access their educational entitlement. This means children learn and make progress in education.

Staff understand and encourage children's culture and religion. Staff make links with local religious leaders and organisations. Children are provided with important religious items. One child has an interactive prayer mat, which helps teach children about prayer. Staff promote children's dietary and language needs in daily routines. Staff address discrimination and intolerance in a sensitive and informative way. Children are supported to understand different cultures as well as their own heritage and identity.

The last inspection found concerns with the maintenance and cleanliness of the home. This inspection found a decline in the condition of the home. These issues include:

- The interior of the home is damaged and requires redecoration.
- Children are unable to play freely in the outdoor area.
- The cleanliness of the home is not good.
- The provider has not ensured that damage to children's bedrooms is repaired.
- One child's bedroom smelled strongly of urine.

Leaders and managers have put together a plan to address these issues. However, the environment is not currently homely or welcoming for children.

Children can identify adults who they trust. Children have positive, nurturing relationships with some adults caring for them. Children are confident that these adults will meet their physical and emotional needs. Children are experiencing some positive relationships.

Staff do not always understand and follow children's care plans. Some staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of children and work in a kind and trauma-informed way. However, this is not consistent within the team.

Staff also do not always provide children with items to allow them to engage in education and activities outside of the home, for example packed lunches. Staff are not providing children with consistent, individualised care. This does not support children to thrive in all areas of their lives.

Staff do not communicate well with people who are important to children. This means that professionals do not always have the information they need to meet children's needs. Children do not always receive consistent, holistic care.

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

Safeguarding incidents are rare in this home. Staff understand their safeguarding duties and how to promote children's welfare. Children say they feel safe.

Children have not gone missing from this home since the last inspection. Staff understand the individual risks for each child and recognise signs that risks might be increasing. This allows the team to take preventative action to ensure that children remain safe at home.

Staff use a range of therapeutic approaches to behaviour management. Positive reward and nurturing care are favoured above consequences or punitive measures. Staff safely use physical interventions. Records provide comprehensive detail about each such incident. Children are being supported to better understand and manage their feelings.

Staff do not always follow procedures to ensure the identity of visitors to the home. There have been no incidents of unsafe people accessing the home. However, failing to check visitors' identity could put children at risk of harm.

Staff receive training about the safe administration of medicines. However, there has been a medication error when staff did not follow the correct medication procedure. Managers undertook an investigation, but failed to send a notification to Ofsted regarding this incident. Although this child was not harmed, the potential for harm caused by medication errors is significant.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Management arrangements are inadequate. The home does not have a registered manager. An interim manager is currently in place. Since the last inspection, leadership and management arrangements have been ineffective. Managers have plans in place to address shortfalls.

There is a negative culture within the home. Staff do not trust each other to complete tasks or meet the needs of the children. When staff raise concerns about team members, these are not robustly addressed. Records show that staff have used disrespectful language against each other. This culture affects children's quality of care.

Staff do not receive regular supervision or appraisal. Supervision records do not show reflective or child-focused discussions. Managers do not monitor, or address, issues raised in supervision. At the last inspection, managers identified concerns about staff practice. Formal action has still not addressed these concerns. Leaders and managers do not have adequate oversight of staff performance.

Staff do not feel supported or listened to by leaders and managers. Team meetings do not always take place. This means staff do not have a forum for practice-related discussions. Staff report that they are not provided with direction about how best to care for children. They have adopted a 'trial and error' approach. When staff raise concerns, managers have not provided a satisfactory response. Children receive an inconsistent quality of care.

Staff can access a range of training. However, leaders and managers do not have good systems to provide oversight of staff training. This means that some staff training is out of date. This could impact on staff's ability to provide safe care.

Leaders and managers do not use good processes to audit children's files. Children's records do not always reflect their current needs.

Staffing levels have not always been high enough. Handovers between shifts have not always happened. This means staff have been unable to provide care for children and complete other tasks. The interim manager has made changes to ensure sufficiency of staff.

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, the 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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)(d)) Specifically, the registered manager must ensure that cleanliness around the home is maintained to a high standard. The registered manager must also ensure that all staff are aware of, and adhere to, the procedures for admitting visitors into the home safely. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 July 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	30 July 2023

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))

In particular, there must be a suitably qualified and experienced manager managing the home.

The registered person must ensure that issues between staff members are swiftly addressed.

The registered person must make sure that all staff receive regular, effective supervision and appraisal. This must include robust systems to address shortfalls in staff practice.

The registered person must have good systems of oversight in place to monitor staff training and development.

The registered person must ensure that there are good systems in place to monitor the care being provided to children. The registered person must quickly take action when the quality of care falls below a good enough standard.

The registered person must have good oversight of children's records, specifically to ensure that their plans reflect their current needs.

The registered person must make sure that there are enough staff within the home to allow for all essential tasks to be completed This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; protect and promote each child’s welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child;	30 July 2023

The conditions are— that the care is delivered by a person who— has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care; and is under the supervision of a person who is appropriately skilled and qualified to supervise that care. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vii)(viii)(ix)(c)(i) (3)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's bedrooms are clean, furnished with all items necessary for their comfort and care and personalised to reflect their individuality. The registered person must also ensure that children are provided with all necessary items to allow them to engage with education and activities outside of the home. The registered person must ensure that staff understand and follow children's care plans and provide care which meets their individual needs.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (d)) Specifically, the registered manager must make sure that there is effective communication with all the important people in each child's life.	30 July 2023
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and	30 July 2023

a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))

Specifically, the registered person must make sure that medicines are stored in a safe and organised way, which enables staff to follow medication procedures.

The registered person must have effective oversight of the administration of medication and ensure that staff are suitably trained to safely administer medicines.

The registered person must have effective oversight of medication records and ensure that any errors in recording are quickly identified and corrected.

Recommendations

- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if there is a serious incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home. Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: SC366002

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys ACE Limited

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

Responsible individual: Thomas Cappleman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nicola Shaw, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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