

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.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2022.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 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: 2 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/03/2022	Full	Good
17/12/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/06/2018	Full	Good
07/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children take part in a range of activities in and out of the home. This gives them structure, helps them to develop social skills and self-confidence, and promotes their overall well-being.

Staff work well in partnership with a range of agencies, communicate well with family members and strongly challenge other professionals when necessary. These efforts ensure that children experience a coordinated response from services and receive good-quality care.

The cleanliness of the home is not well maintained. There are also unresolved maintenance issues. For example, a broken electrical item has not been removed and the decor in some areas of the home needs restoration. This does not create a homely environment for children.

Children's health needs are appropriately supported. Staff work well with health services to meet children's needs. One family member said, 'You can see the difference in him; he looks well, he looks healthier.'

Children's education is prioritised and promoted. When children are not in education, managers work hard to find a suitable school and ensure that the gap in their attendance is minimal. One teacher said, 'They are absolutely fantastic. The communication is brilliant and the advice they have given the school has helped teachers to support [name of child] the best they can.'

Children's files contain the necessary documents, and plans are regularly reviewed by managers. However, one staff member was not aware of the most recent updates to a child's support plans. This could limit the effectiveness of the care that children receive.

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

The management team lead a culture of positive safeguarding practice that helps to protect children. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in a range of safeguarding scenarios. Children said that they felt happy and safe.

Staff complete comprehensive risk-management plans for each child. This enables them to develop a better understanding of how to keep children safe. Staff understand the importance of supporting children to stay safe online. Key-work sessions have been completed by staff in relation to online safety. However, sessions were not planned or recorded in a way that is useful to the child. This limited the effectiveness of this work and is a missed opportunity to help children develop strategies to keep themselves safe.

Staff use a consistent approach to behaviour management. Emphasis is placed on positive reward and trauma-informed practice. Staff are all trained to safely use physical intervention. Staff use a variety of de-escalation techniques to try to prevent crises. Children understand the rules and feel that they are treated fairly.

Children have been reported missing from home. In such instances, staff always follow the missing-from-home protocol. Staff get to know the children well and show a good understanding of children's behaviour. This allows staff to recognise early indicators of emerging risks and put in place strategies to avoid them.

The leadership team is empathetic towards children's life experiences and see beyond their behaviours to the underlying causes. Leaders and managers use this knowledge and experience to support the staff team to develop a more therapeutic approach to care. This style of practice is in the early stages of being established in the team, but staff and other professionals report that a more positive and stable environment is emerging as a result.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is currently absent and another suitably qualified manager is covering until her return. The senior leadership team has quickly identified areas for improvement and agreed a child-focused development plan for the service. Although this is during a period of change in management, the impact on the quality of care for the children has been positive.

Staff plan carefully when children are going to move into or out of the home. Before children move in, the manager completes a thorough assessment of needs and risks in relation to the children already living in the home. This assessment is used to decide whether children can be safely cared for. When children's placements have not been successful, the leadership team has taken useful learning from this. Planning for children moving out of the home begins well in advance of the move so that they can be adequately prepared. This approach provides children with the support that they need to successfully navigate big life changes.

An independent person visits the home each month. Their report includes the views of the children and important stakeholders. Any actions suggested are quickly completed by the manager.

The location risk assessment considers all local risks and includes some relevant information from other local professionals. However, details of resources available via the local authority local offer have not been considered. This means that children may not always access all the support that is available to them.

The manager ensures that the home is adequately staffed. The manager follows a safe recruitment process, which ensures that all new staff are vetted. This ensures that children receive safe care from a stable staff team. However, not all staff ensure that visitors are checked before entering the home.

Leaders and managers respond quickly to allegations and complaints. Following any such investigation, leaders consider opportunities for learning to make improvements. Managers also use good auditing and monitoring systems to retain oversight of staff practice. This helps to maintain consistency in the care and support that children receive.

Staff have completed a range of mandatory training. They have also completed training specific to the needs of the children that they are caring for. This helps staff to have a good understanding of the experiences of the children and equips them with the skills to meet children's needs. However, the manager does not have a good system of oversight in place to track staff training. This means that some staff training has lapsed, which could impact on staff's ability to provide safe care.

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 located so that children are effectively safeguarded; 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)(c)(d)) Specifically, the registered manager must ensure that cleanliness around the home is maintained to a high standard. Broken furniture or electrical items must be removed and damage to the property must be repaired and redecorated in a timely manner. The registered manager must also ensure that all staff are aware of, and adhere to, the procedures for admitting visitors into the home safely.	30 January 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 January 2023

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

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

In particular, the registered manager must use a robust system of review to ensure that staff training is kept up-to-date.

The registered manager must also ensure that staff are aware of, and fully understand, the risk assessments and risk management plans for each child.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. This is specifically in relation to ensuring that key-work sessions are completed and recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person should ensure that managers and staff are aware of the local offer setting out the support available for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.4)

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: Isabella James

Inspector

Nicola Shaw, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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