

SC386502

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children and young people who may have challenging behaviour and/or may be emotionally vulnerable.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2018.

Visit dates: 1 to 2 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 12 February 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

No serious or widespread concerns were identified in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The home environment creates a genuine feeling of warmth. It replicates the feel of a family home as much as possible, which enables young people to thrive and excel. From their starting points, young people make great progress because of the individualised, nurturing care they receive.

Young people were observed to have positive relationships with staff who clearly understand their individual and unique needs. Staff are responsive to young people's requests, which means they feel listened to.

Progression for one young person in all aspects of her life is remarkable. When the young person moved into the home she had limited communication and social skills. Her education outcomes were limited and there were significant concerns about her personal hygiene and self-care skills. Through gentle but persistent support the young person has transformed. Having pets in the home (a dog, chickens, a hamster and a rabbit) has undoubtedly assisted her progress because of her love of, and ability to relate to, animals.

Contact with significant people is promoted. One young person has achieved a successful transition into a familial foster placement, which was the desired outcome of her placement. Staff supported her well through challenges and uncertainty about this placement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Young people are helped to access education which is appropriate to their needs. Managers are strong advocates that the most suitable educational placement is sourced for young people. This improves their chances of a successful and positive education experience.

Staff educate young people about current and relevant issues. This means that they have an improved knowledge of the world around them, including what is happening in relation to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The safety of children

Managers have responded positively and proactively to requirements made relating to safeguarding young people at the home's last inspection. Staff's skills in protecting young people are developed through training, team meetings and supervisions. This results in a strong safeguarding culture with clear lines of accountability.

Staff know what each young person's risks are. They are equipped and skilled at managing and reducing these risks. Where young people need one-to-one supervision, staff are clear about this and ensure that this happens.

Staff are skilled at managing young people's behaviour. They can confidently redirect young people should they engage in unwanted behaviours. Young people are provided with the opportunity to reflect following any incidents. This helps them to

understand and self-regulate their behaviour. Staff were witnessed to give young people constant reminders about behaviour, using clear language and gentle voice tones.

Risks relating to e-safety are well managed. Young people who may be at risk online are educated frequently about the potential dangers. Their internet use is both limited and supervised to reduce the risk of harm.

Managers are strong advocates for young people and ensure that they have access to specialist help, support and services to address their emotional, social and health issues. This improves the life chances and opportunities for all children.

Leaders and managers

Managers have an excellent understanding about young people's individual needs. Managers go to great lengths to ensure that young people have the opportunity to receive the tailored, all-round support which meets their needs.

Staff morale has improved. Although there have been some changes to the staff team, the core team has remained stable. This provides a secure base and continuity of care for young people. Staff provide high-quality, consistent care. Where shortfalls in practice are identified, effective and appropriate action is taken.

Training and supervision are in place for staff to ensure that they feel confident in their roles. Staff spoken to reported they felt well supported by managers, who are approachable.

Partnership working is embedded into practice at this home. Partner agencies speak highly of the home's manager and understand the impact she has on young people's experience and progress in the home.

Records are well organised and are of a high quality. The manager takes time to review, appraise and comment on records. This gives her a good oversight of the home and the work staff undertake with young people. This enables the manager to understand and evaluate the quality of care afforded to young people.

The manager has responded effectively to the requirements and recommendations made at the home's previous inspection. There is clear evidence of progress and development in safeguarding young people and leadership and management of the home. No requirements or recommendations are made at this assurance visit.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC386502

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Maybrook House, Queensway,
Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: David Carser

Registered manager: Catherine Chandler

Inspectors

Charlie Bamber, Social Care Inspector
Pauline Yates, Social Care Inspector

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