

SC386502

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. 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 was registered with Ofsted in September 2018.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 February 2020

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: 5 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/06/2018	Full	Good
02/05/2017	Full	Good
18/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children report that they feel happy and well cared for and are making some progress from their starting points. However, shortfalls in staff's practice, safeguarding and leadership and management arrangements are potentially jeopardising the children's welfare and progress.

Despite the identified shortfalls, positive interactions between the staff and the children were observed during the inspection. Children have regular opportunities to share their views, wishes and feelings with the manager and staff at weekly children's meetings and regular key-work sessions. Key-work sessions are individualised to support children's specific needs. Without a doubt, the staff team is child focused and nurturing.

Children's health and well-being needs are met well. Routine and specialist health appointments are attended as necessary to ensure that children receive suitable support and intervention to meet their physical and emotional health needs. Children are encouraged to take part in a variety of activities. They enjoy regular group activities, as well as pursuing individual hobbies and membership of local football and basketball teams. Furthermore, children can participate in weekly yoga sessions to support their emotional well-being.

Two of the three children living at the home are not in full-time education and have three hours per day one-to-one tuition. This does not provide them with the level of education that they are entitled to and does not meet their educational needs. The manager has challenged professionals to address this. At the time of the inspection, full-time education placements had been identified for the children and leaders expect that they will be in full-time education in the near future.

The registered manager and staff support children to maintain contact with the people who are important to them. They enjoy regular contact with family members and, when necessary, staff supervise this contact to ensure that it is safe. However, some parents have made complaints about the home. The manager has responded to these complaints. It was noted during the inspection that there has been a delay in parents being informed of significant safeguarding incidents involving their children. This does not demonstrate that staff have followed safeguarding policies and procedures and does not help to maintain positive relationships with family members.

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

Although safeguarding shortfalls are not widespread, safeguarding practice needs to improve. Suitable action is not always taken when safeguarding incidents occur or when there is concern for children's welfare. Furthermore, staff do not always follow

safeguarding procedures when a safeguarding incident has occurred. This places children at further risk.

The response and recording of safeguarding concerns for children do not always ensure that children are helped and protected and that safeguarding procedures are followed. For example, after an incident where two children and a member of staff were placed at risk during a car journey, the information shared and recorded unclear and inconsistent. Although a risk assessment for travelling in the car was put in place following the incident, this included inaccurate information and did not include sufficient strategies to help the staff to manage the risk.

The risk assessments reviewed during the inspection did not contain sufficient information about all known risks to children or strategies to manage identified risks, such as being missing from home, allegations, sexualised behaviour and self-harm. Furthermore, the staff spoken to during the inspection were unclear on the individual risks to children. Consequently, there is a failure to ensure that risks are managed consistently by staff and that appropriate support is in place to help to keep children safe.

Staff lack an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in caring for children and have failed to follow a child's local authority care plan. One child's placement plan is very clear that he requires on one-to-one staffing at all times. However, staff failed to follow his plan and he was left unsupervised for a short period of time. This placed the child and other children at risk of harm. An allegation was made against the child during the time that he was left unsupervised. The relevant safeguarding professionals were informed, and an investigation was undertaken that resulted in no further action by the police. An internal investigation is currently being undertaken by the provider.

Recruitment practice is not sufficiently robust. For example, although references are verified prior to new staff working at the home, the verification records do not always include sufficient information to demonstrate that the provider has obtained full information to confirm that the member of staff is suitable to work at the home.

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

Management oversight, monitoring and review systems are not sufficiently robust. Shortfalls in the home's records, poor safeguarding practice and incidents of staff not sharing safeguarding information are not promptly identified and addressed. These are missed opportunities to reflect on the home's strengths and weaknesses and to identify themes, trends and areas for improvement. The registered manager and responsible individual were not aware of the shortfalls identified at the inspection and the areas for development for the home and the staff team.

Changes in the company have resulted in staff from another home working at this home. This has caused some conflict in the staff team. The manager has not taken sufficient action to address this. For example, the staff rotas did not take account of

the issues between two members of staff, and a further issue arose when they were on shift together.

Regular team meetings take place that enable the staff team to discuss the needs and progress of the children, practice-related issues and the development of the home. However, there has been no discussion in team meetings to discuss the animosity and unsettlement in the staff team. This does not help to improve staff morale.

The systems in place for managing and improving poor performance need to be strengthened. When staff have failed to follow safeguarding procedures or have not taken sufficient action to safeguard children, the manager has not always addressed the matter with staff. Staff debriefings do not always take place following an incident to reflect on the incident and identify any shortfalls in practice. Consequently, the staff team is not supported to improve practice to keep children safe and ensure that they receive a good quality of care.

Staff supervision records do not demonstrate that staff receive practice-related supervision. Staff rarely discuss the needs of the children in their care or reflect on practice. Furthermore, supervision records do not demonstrate that poor performance, difficult relationships between staff and an unsettled staff team have been addressed. This does not help to develop and support the staff team.

Significant events involving the children living at the home have not been reported to Ofsted. This failure to share information with all relevant people compromises the safety and welfare of children. Furthermore, the regulator is unable to carry out its monitoring function to ensure that appropriate action is taken by the provider to safeguard children.

Despite the shortfalls identified at the inspection, the feedback from children, staff and stakeholders was positive. For example, a social worker said, 'The staff team do whatever is best for the child; she has made good progress and is happy.' A member of staff said, 'I feel supported by the manager.'

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 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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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. (Regulation 12(1), (2)(a)(b))	27/03/2020
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	27/03/2020

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on– feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees– receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	27/03/2020
The registered person must maintain records (‘case records’) for each child, which– include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and	27/03/2020

are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious (Regulation 40(4)(a)(b))	27/03/2020

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31–33 the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC386502

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

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

Responsible individual: David Carser

Registered manager: Catherine Chandler

Inspector

Lisa Mulcahy, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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