

SC386522

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who may have needs that are associated with social, behavioural and/or emotional difficulties.

The current manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2015.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 April 2021

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: 22 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Not applicable.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2019	Full	Good
08/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
28/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
12/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children living at the home are settled. They have trusting, warm relationships with the staff. If the children have worries or concerns, they can talk to staff in the knowledge that they will be listened to and supported.

The children are extremely happy and have made progress in many aspects of their lives. Children are very proud of their progress, such as learning the skills to be more independent and responsible. They speak highly of the staff and their home. A child made the following comment in a survey questionnaire: 'My carers are the best I could ever ask for. They are funny, kind, caring, helpful and loving.'

The feedback provided by children's social workers and other professionals about the children's lived experience is unanimously positive. A social worker said: '[Name of child] has made significant progress since living in the home.'

Staff closely monitor children's health and emotional well-being. The staff make sure that children always receive suitable advice, services and treatment to meet their specific health needs. For example, children benefit from therapeutic input that is helping them to become more confident about expressing their feelings.

Staff spend dedicated time talking to the children about health-related issues such as personal hygiene. Children are therefore demonstrating an awareness and understanding of the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles. Children like to exercise and develop their culinary skills.

Despite the restrictions that are in place as a result of COVID-19, staff have made sure that the children have been supported to spend time with family members and friends who are important in their lives. This has aided children's sense of belonging and self-identity.

Staff have ensured that the children have continued their education during the pandemic. They attend school regularly. Staff actively support children with their education, and have worked very closely with education providers to overcome barriers. They ensure that every child has the best opportunity to achieve their educational potential. A teacher said: '[Name of child] is happy, making progress and is supported by staff.'

Children are provided with opportunities during family meetings to discuss information that is important to them and identify/talk about areas that they would like to see improved. For example, their coming in times and a suggestion about a summer house for the garden. Children have their own pets – a cat called Simba and a goldfish called Dave – who are referred to as part of the family.

Staff ensure that children are well supported in pursuing their hobbies and interests, but during the COVID-19 pandemic this has not always been possible. However, staff have kept children occupied with a suitable range of alternative activities. The children enjoyed a recent outing to the beach where they listened to music, danced on the beach and ended the day with an ice cream.

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

The levels of care, supervision and support children receive contribute significantly to their safety. Children say that they feel safe and, although there is the occasional frustration, they understand why there must be certain rules and restrictions.

Staff spend time with children to help them understand how to keep safe, such as work sessions on mobile phone safety. This is having a positive impact in that children use their phones responsibly and hand them in at night. However, managers need to ensure that the risk management plans in place for children are kept current and capture any new risks and strategies for staff to follow.

The records show that staff take the necessary action when children go missing from care. Due to the work carried out with the children and the strategies in place, there has been a significant reduction in the number of missing-from-care episodes, which is positive. A child said, 'when I come home the first thing the staff do is check I'm safe and ok, before they talk to me about the risks.'

Children have appropriate boundaries and structures in place. Staff are successfully supporting children to understand behavioural expectations, such as the importance of returning home on time after being out with friends. Staff listen to children's views and show flexibility in revising such arrangements without compromising the children's care plans.

Staff use behaviour management strategies such as de-escalation to defuse situations. Positive praise and rewards are used to reinforce good behaviour. Only occasionally is physical intervention used to prevent children from harming themselves or others. However, the holds used are not always in line with the home's approved methods. The manager has addressed this with the staff.

The internal monitoring of the home and the independent visits are not consistently effective. Although an allegation against a staff member was reported to the child's social worker, the manager had not identified the need to make a referral to the designated officer. This matter was also not picked up by the person appointed to undertake the monthly external monitoring visits of the home. Stronger management oversight is needed to ensure that safeguarding practice in this area is effective.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced and qualified manager who has good insight into children's needs and has high expectations. She is supported well by a committed

and motivated deputy manager. Together they lead a team of staff who work collectively to provide good-quality, nurturing care for children living at the home.

There have been few changes to the staff team, which means that children have been consistently cared for by a stable, supportive staff team. Managers and staff have shown good resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have achieved this by maintaining a positive team spirit and morale. Staff ensure that children receive the necessary advice to keep themselves and others safe within COVID-19 governmental guidelines. Children have acted responsibly, which is positive.

The management team provides a supportive environment for staff through supervision and appraisal. There is good focus on children's experiences and progress. Staff are given the opportunity to reflect on their practice. They develop their knowledge and skill base through training that is tailored to the specific needs of the children, such as training on child sexual exploitation and county lines. Staff report that they like working at the home. They feel valued and supported by the manager and deputy manager.

There are good methods for exchanging information, in the form of daily handovers and team meetings. Staff are given opportunities to voice any concerns and talk about the children's lived experience. Staff are therefore kept up to date with events and any changes in practice that are relevant to children's needs.

The manager and staff are able to describe the progress that children are making, but records in some areas do not demonstrate the positive work that has been carried out to support children's achievements. The manager's monitoring systems, therefore, could be strengthened to ensure that targets for individual children remain on track and their progress is captured in the records.

As part of her quality review of the home, the manager has identified areas for development. The home environment is now equipped with a new conservatory, which gives the children and staff extra space to chill and relax in. Although the house is warm and welcoming, certain areas would benefit from receiving some attention to improve the overall level of cleanliness and maintenance.

Internal monitoring by the manager is an area that could be improved. Although sanctions are used in the home, staff do not consistently record the detail of the sanctions. This means that the manager is unable to review the effectiveness of the measure or identify whether it is proportionate. This is a missed opportunity to review and monitor staff practice in the home.

The requirements and recommendation made at the last inspection have all been addressed.

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This specifically relates to ensuring that risk management plans that relate to children's needs are kept current and up to date, and capture all risk reduction strategies for staff to follow.	18 June 2021
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that 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)(d)) This specifically relates to maintaining the cleanliness of the home, and ensuring that minor repairs are attended to as soon as is practicable.	18 June 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	18 June 2021

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This relates to ensuring that there is stronger management oversight, and specifically that: incidents of a safeguarding nature are reviewed in a timely manner, including any lessons learned; records are consistently signed and dated, not overwritten; and records of children’s journeys clearly capture the progress they are making from their starting points.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children’s home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that a referral to the designated officer for safeguarding is made in a prompt manner in response to allegations made against staff.	18 June 2021
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.	18 June 2021

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that, following any restraint or control: an appropriate person, who was not involved in the restraint or control, completes the relevant recording; and sanctions used are reviewed for their effectiveness, and are recorded.	
The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—	18 June 2021

children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the need for greater scrutiny in reviewing incidents and allegations, and the need to ensure that safeguarding procedures are being followed.	
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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: SC386522

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Education Ltd

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Maybrook House, Queensway,
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Responsible individual: David Carser

Registered manager: Susan Davies

Inspectors

Michael Charnley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
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