

# SC009651

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is one of a number owned and managed by a private organisation. The home specialises in caring for children with attachment difficulties who may have experienced multiple placement breakdowns. Children are of primary school age on admission. The home is registered to care for four children.

The manager took on the role of acting manager in July 2019 and was registered with Ofsted in April 2020. He was the former deputy manager and has worked at the home for several years.

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

This setting did not receive an assurance visit last inspection year.

### Inspection dates: 28 to 29 April 2021

|                                                                                           |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

**Date of last inspection:** 10 December 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 10/12/2019      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 28/01/2019      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 08/08/2017      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 29/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children have made excellent progress in all aspects of their lives since living at the home. This is because the staff team provides consistent routines and structure for children. Children build strong and respectful relationships with staff. Staff described the children and staff team as a family. Children are happy living in the home. One child called the home 'perfect' and another child said: 'Living in the home has changed my life.'

The staff team works hard to promote family time and rebuild family relationships. This has included making amendments to agreed plans to facilitate children's time with their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. One parent said: 'I couldn't have asked for better for [Name], the staff know how to manage her. The changes in her behaviour and the bond she has with staff is fantastic.'

Social workers speak highly of the care provided to children. Children are encouraged to self-regulate, express and understand their emotions. Focused key-work sessions and access to specialist services for in-house therapy support children to be able to do this. Social workers said that children are encouraged to enjoy their childhood by a staff team that is child-centred and has an investment in the children.

Children enjoy going to school and they have excellent attendance. The members of the staff team understand children's educational needs and support children daily with their reading and homework. One child requires an urgent review of their education, health and care (EHC) plan. The manager has raised this with the child's social worker and specific educational professionals. However, he has not continued to pursue this with the local authority responsible for the child's education, to ensure that there is no impact on the child's future education.

During the pandemic, the staff team has engaged children in innovative and creative activities. This has included sports days, pen pal schemes with children in other countries, completing a 100-mile walk to raise money for the local animal sanctuary and making a food box for the vulnerable in the community. Children's experiences are evidenced in a lovely 'Journey through COVID-19' book. As restrictions have eased, children have started to return to their weekly groups and activities, such as scouts, youth clubs and football practice.

Children's bedrooms are personalised to their interests and hobbies. Children are involved in choosing the homely decor and soft furnishings throughout the home. However, the hallway and staircase areas look worn and require decorating to the same standard as the rest of the home. The manager has obtained quotes for this work to be completed in the next few months.

Transition planning when children move from the home is thorough. Children are provided with beautiful memory books that capture their time at the home.

Children's views about their future are always considered. One child, who has made exceptional progress while living at the home for several years, has been supported with her request to move to another home within the company for older children.

**How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Children feel safe living at the home and said that staff teach them how to keep themselves safe. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's risks. They work consistently with agreed behaviour management strategies and with other agencies to safeguard children. There has been a significant reduction in risk for all children, with them making safer choices since their starting points at the home.

Restraint is used as a last resort to keep children and others around them safe. The manager's evaluation of restraint records demonstrates that the measures used are necessary and proportionate. The staff's knowledge of the children means that they can identify triggers to children's behaviour and respond appropriately without the need to use physical intervention in most instances.

Children do not go missing from home. Children are given age-appropriate levels of trust to enable them to develop their independence, such as routinely catching the bus home from school. Although it is not a current risk for children, the members of the staff team are proactive in ensuring that they educate children about risks associated with child sexual and criminal exploitation. Children are also supported to keep themselves safe on the internet and this is monitored closely by the staff.

Children are listened to and their views considered in all aspects of their care. As a result of this, there have been no complaints or allegations made by children. Children understand how to use the complaints procedure and said that any concerns they raise are always resolved effectively by a member of staff or the manager. Children have positive relationships with each other and any day-to-day issues between children are dealt with immediately by staff.

Sanctions are rarely used and when implemented are restorative in nature. Sanctions evidence that children are encouraged to think about the impact of their behaviour on their progress. The manager's evaluation of sanctions revisits the effectiveness of the measure used, to determine whether, as a result, the children have made better choices about their behaviour.

An effective admissions impact risk assessment is in place, which considers all aspects of children's care and potential shared risks when they are placed together. Consequently, there has been little disruption to any of the children currently living in the home when new children have been admitted to the home.

**The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The manager is driven and passionate about providing a high standard of care for children. He is a positive role model for both children and staff, by promoting a

nurturing and transparent environment. He knows the children well and his high expectations are reflected in the way that staff work with the children.

Staff are extremely positive about working in the home and feel well supported by the manager. They are provided with regular practice-related supervisions, and benefit from reflective consultations with the in-house therapist to help them support children's emotional well-being. Team meetings are used effectively. The manager encourages staff to share helpful strategies when working with children and identifying ways to support children to progress.

Continual professional development is a key strength of the service. The home's workforce development plan focuses on inspiring staff to progress their skills in their current roles. The manager and staff work together to agree individual targets and goals for improving practice, which are reviewed at supervisions and annual appraisals.

The manager uses research models to track children's progress and to reflect on incident management. The manager also embeds staff learning through research-based sessions; for example, the staff team engaged in a piece of work in relation to attachment and loss. The manager ensures that he is up to date with current themes in the sector and is completing a leadership course to support his own professional development.

The manager has identified an equality and diversity champion within the staff team, who engages children in creative ways to educate them about different religions and cultures and celebrating festivals. The children have had fun learning about Eid, celebrating Random Acts of Kindness Day and supporting the NHS during the pandemic.

Through robust monitoring, the manager understands the home's strengths and any areas for improvement. He monitors trends and patterns in the home and acts to address any shortfalls. The review of the quality of care report provides a thorough account of the progress children have made. Regular feedback is obtained from children, families, staff and social workers about their experiences of the home. However, this is not included in the report to consider a full evaluation of the quality of the service provided.

## 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     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <p>In meeting the quality standards–</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>(Regulation 5 (c))</p> <p>Specifically, the register manager should continue to escalate their concerns, where children do not have an up-to-date EHC plan, with the virtual head or education liaison officer from the local authority responsible for completing and reviewing the plan.</p> | 11 June 2021 |

### Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. Specifically, the stairs and hallway require decorating and refurbishing to the high standard of the rest of the home to promote a homely environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. Specifically, the manager should ensure that the feedback they obtain from children, staff, social workers and families is included in the review of quality of care report to demonstrate that they have considered a full evaluation of the service provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

## **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:** SC009651

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Keys Child Care Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Keys Care Ltd, Maybrook House, Queensway,  
Halesowen B63 4AH

**Responsible individual:** Sarah Haworth

**Registered manager:** Wayne Ralphs

## Inspector

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2021