

SC028174

Registered provider: Keys Direct Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large national provider. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced and was present throughout this inspection.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May, and 30 July 2024

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: 23 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/01/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/07/2022	Full	Good
07/09/2021	Full	Good
03/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a home that is kept to a good standard. The home has benefitted from recent redecoration and children's bedrooms are personalised to reflect their tastes. One child has two pet rats which they enjoy caring for. The home has a plentiful amount of space where children can choose to be together or spend time apart. One child helped staff to adapt a small space under the stairs to be a quiet, sensory space, that children often use.

Children are well prepared when they move to and away from the home. The manager has a robust system in place to understand the needs of children being considered and whether staff have the skills to care for them effectively. Children's views are sought and listened to regarding transitions. Children were consulted when consideration was being given to a third child moving to the home. They were excited to meet their peer and wrote letters to welcome them. This helped the child to settle quickly at the home. Another child shared that they wanted to move to another home where they would be cared for alone. The manager worked empathetically to understand their wishes and advocated for them effectively. A subsequent move was carefully planned at a pace comfortable for the child.

Both children living at the home attend school full time and are making steady progress. The manager works collaboratively with educational professionals to develop strategies that encourage children to feel supported and ready to learn. For one child this has meant a gradual reduction in incidents and physical interventions occurring at the school. Staff celebrate children's achievements and work hard to ensure that children experience important milestones. There are plans in place to offer one child a prom where this cannot be accessed at school. As a result children are aspirational about their futures and have identified potential career paths.

Children can influence the care they receive at the home. They are engaged in regular and meaningful keyworks and children's meetings alongside staff. These have a sense of purpose and often develop the children's understanding or learning. Where children make requests, they are acted upon where possible, and the manager ensures that children know the actions that staff are taking. This helps children to understand that their voices are valued by the adults caring for them.

Children have warm and reciprocal relationships with staff. Staff support children to engage in activities they enjoy, including spending time with people that are important to them. Staff ensure that children can remember special memories through beautiful scrapbooks and newsletters. Children say that they love their home and the staff team. They share that they feel cared for and listened to by staff who treat them with kindness.

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

Since the last inspection there have been a high number of safeguarding incidents notified to Ofsted. This reflects a more challenging period for the home. When serious incidents have occurred the manager works quickly with involved professionals to safety plan and adjusts risk assessments accordingly. Staff utilise the provider's behaviour specialists to ensure that their behaviour strategies are appropriate, and to reflect on how their practice can be adapted. Following challenging incidents children have been supported to quickly regulate and to move on positively, often in sensory or art based activities. This helps children not to feel shamed and strengthens their relationships with staff.

When children go missing from the home staff have felt confident to follow agreed safety plans. For one child with low mood this meant staff physically intervening to prevent them accessing a busy road, where they would have been in danger. Where children have left the home, they have been quickly followed by staff and encouraged to return. The manager ensures that both children and staff can discuss such incidents following missing episodes. These focus on how incidents could be prevented in the future.

Physical interventions have been low level, and proportionate. Staff have appropriately risk assessed and released holds when children have indicated that they are calm. This has prevented incidents escalating further and assures children that their voices are heard by staff. When one child complained following an intervention this was taken seriously by the manager and reported to the required professionals. Children are helped to understand how holds are used to keep them safe.

Children have previously self-harmed but incidents of this are reducing. Children often seek help from staff and can reflect appropriately on the reasons why they have hurt themselves. Staff offer children alternative strategies to redirect and support children when they are upset. This has recently included developing personalised sensory boxes that help children to feel calm. Room searches are used when needed but are in line with current presenting risk. This helps children to know that staff trust them and encourages them to make decisions that keep them safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is run by a committed manager who is ambitious for the children cared for at the home. She understands the needs of the children and is a strong advocate for them. As a result children recognise her as someone they can trust and rely on. One child sent a letter to the manager thanking her, it stated 'before I came here I didn't know what having a proper family felt like and you guys welcomed me with open arms'.

When staff begin work at the home they have a clear induction process. Staff have access to a comprehensive training programme which they feel prepares them well for their work. More recently staff have had access to bespoke training which ensures they are as prepared as possible to meet the needs of children in the home. A culture of

learning has developed within the home and regular team meetings are used to further develop each other's knowledge and approach.

Staff receive regular and good quality supervision discussions. These allow space to discuss the children they care for, how best to implement informed practice and their personal wellbeing. Consequently, staff feel well supported by the manager and are resilient. One staff member spoken to shared 'I really love the girls and even though there was a tricky period I feel we have got through it together'.

The manager understands the importance of clear oversight and auditing within the home with this now imbedded into practice. The manager works hard to ensure that she reviews and comments on incidents and keywork discussions. These offer good guidance and encourage staff reflection on actions taken and language used. The manager has developed systems to review the patterns of behaviours within the home at regular intervals, this informs care planning for the children moving forward.

The home has sufficient staffing to care for two children but there would be a shortfall should a third child be admitted to the home. Recruitment remains ongoing to address this. Despite some more recent challenges staff shared that they support each other and therefore retention of staff since the last inspection has been good. This offers consistency to the children and has allowed for a focus on strengthening practice.

Information about this inspection

This inspection took place on 20 and 21 May 2024, but we also returned on 30 July 2024 to gather additional evidence.

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: SC028174

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Direct Care Limited

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Sarika Modeshia

Registered manager: Sarah Simington

Inspectors

Kamal Bhamra, Ofsted Inspector
Louise Copping, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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