

SC033817

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 private provider. It provides care for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced and is registered with Ofsted.

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: 28 to 29 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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	outstanding
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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: 23 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/07/2019	Full	Good
05/06/2018	Full	Good
25/04/2017	Full	Good
12/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive outstanding care and support at this home. Consequently, the outcomes for children improve from their starting points. Children receive warm and nurturing care from consistent carers. The staff show resilience and determination in not giving up, despite some of the challenges that they faced, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, children feel that staff care about them and they are enabled to build trusting relationships with the adults in the home. They will talk to staff about things that are concerning them, and this gives staff the opportunity to support children effectively. Children make significant progress in all areas of their lives.

Children have education placements that are well suited to their individual needs. The manager has been a strong advocate for children to access appropriate education that can meet their needs. One child had their existing school placement maintained, despite being a considerable distance from the home. This has provided stability and consistency to the child, who is making good progress at school. One education professional commented that the home has met a child's emotional needs, so they are now able to learn. This has improved the attendance and attainment for the child who is now achieving at a similar level to their peers. Another child, who was given a six-week trial period at school, has made such good progress that they will be attending full-time after half term.

Children's health has improved, and the manager has worked with external agencies in facilitating positive change. The designated therapy team has worked with staff in implementing working practices that are designed to support and nurture children. For example, staff use positive messages and natural consequences in response to incidents, rather than using sanctions. Children who previously engaged in smoking and substance misuse have now stopped.

Staff support and encourage children to maintain contact with people who matter to them, such as family members and previous carers. Short-break holidays have been arranged to allow children to spend quality time away from the home with people who are important to them. This has supported children to remain connected and build on existing relationships. Children are building friendships with children outside of the home, and one child has recently started meeting friends in the local area.

Children have opportunities to participate in a variety of clubs and activities in the local community. One child regularly engages in volunteering activities with local animal welfare groups. This has given the child a focus for ongoing education and future career choices. Another child attends a local boxing club, and this has given him a focus away from the home to pursue his interests.

Transition planning and preparing children for independence are strengths of this home. The planning not only covers the basics of home management and budgeting, for children moving on to more independent living, but also provides additional life skills, such as gaining employment and engaging with the community. Two children who recently left the home both gained permanent employment before they moved on. This gave them the opportunity to build support networks in their community and a way of earning additional money to supplement their budget. The progress that some children have made means that they will be moving on from the home into foster placements. One child has made the positive move to return back to the care of their family.

Children have a clear and active voice in the home. They are regularly consulted regarding their care and the development of the home. Children give their views about their plans and risk assessments, and this supports them in understanding their goals and targets. The manager is a visible presence and has regular meetings with the children. This gives children additional opportunities to express their views.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been managed well and staff have gone above and beyond to support children through this time. The home has had two periods of isolation due to positive COVID-19 tests, and during this time, staff moved into the home to support the children. This provided stability and consistency and gave children a sense of shared experiences with the staff caring for them.

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

There are low numbers of incidents in the home, and when these have occurred, they have been well-managed. Incidents requiring physical restraint are rare, and this practice has not been used since October 2020. Staff have a clear understanding of the children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans. These plans are detailed, individual to the child and regularly reviewed and shared with the team. This supports staff to work consistently with children and understand how best to support them.

Complaints and allegations are rare and have been appropriately managed when they have occurred. The manager has consulted with external professionals and shared information to help inform decision-making. The manager took swift and robust action in response to an external complaint.

One child, who arrived at the home with a history of going missing from care and criminal exploitation in the community, has had no incidents since moving to this home. The manager sought advice from a specialist external team and implemented a care plan and risk assessment in line with the recommendations. The nurturing care provided has had a positive impact on the child and they are making good progress.

There has only been one missing-from-care episode in the home, and staff took appropriate action and followed the risk assessment and protocol in place. External professionals were consulted with, and the child safely returned within a short time.

This appears to have been a one-off event and the child took part in a return interview with the social worker. Following this event, the risk assessment was reviewed and updated with additional support measures put in place.

Staff work with an ethos of promoting and rewarding positive behaviour to encourage change. Children have clear and consistent boundaries and are regularly consulted with about their goals and targets. The home does not give sanctions; instead, staff discuss natural consequences to actions with children, to develop their understanding of how behaviour can affect themselves and others.

The physical environment is clean, warm and homely. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their individual taste. A new games room has recently been built, and children have been contributing ideas for the décor and resources for this.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is passionate about their role and the positive difference they can make to children's lives. They display strong leadership and guidance and have high expectations and aspirations for the children and the staff team. They have clear management oversight of key documents and utilise internal and external monitoring tools to implement change and development.

The manager has implemented change and progress through working with others and external agencies. They have a clear vision of the care and outcomes they want to achieve for the children and positively role model this. Staff feel well supported by the manager and receive regular supervision, appraisals and mentoring. Staff aspire for career development and progression in the home and morale is high.

The manager has built positive relationships with external professionals, and feedback on the care provided in the home is universally positive. They work well as part of multi-disciplinary teams and include external professionals as part of planning and review processes for children. This has led to risk assessments and care plans having input from, and being informed by, people in specialist roles, such as the designated Police team who deal with criminal exploitation.

Staff have all completed mandatory training and additional training which is relevant to the needs of children in the home. The manager undertakes specific workshops with the staff team, to supplement knowledge and understanding in important areas. External professionals have also delivered specific training to staff.

New staff have been given a comprehensive induction into the home and feel supported by the manager. There are robust procedures in place that support safe recruitment, and staff involved in recruitment processes have undertaken additional training. The manager is currently recruiting for new staff and has a clear view of the standard of staff that she will recruit to the home.

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: SC033817

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Direct Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: David Carser

Registered manager: Sarika Modeshia

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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