

# SC034944

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is managed by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to four children of either gender.

The current manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2017.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

### Inspection dates: 1 and 2 December 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 | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

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:** 21 October 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 21/10/2019      | Full            | Outstanding            |
| 06/09/2018      | Full            | Outstanding            |
| 05/09/2017      | Full            | Good                   |
| 02/03/2017      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |

## Inspection judgements

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

Children living in this home have specific and complex needs. The individualised, high-quality care provided ensures that children are making exceptional progress and are having improved and positive experiences.

Children are achieving academically. All children have exceptional attendance levels. Staff proactively support children to complete their homework after school. Positive routines and support have enabled one child to receive an award for academic excellence and other children to make substantial progress in line with their starting points. This means that children are progressing in line with their peers and will have increased opportunities in the future.

Children's health needs are regularly monitored. The manager has advocated for children and the need for further enquiry and assessment when there were concerns a child's health needs were not correctly identified. This resulted in a child getting the correct diagnoses and interventions necessary to support them.

Children have meaningful hobbies and interests. They are engaging in local clubs such as guides, cadets, running and football club. Children also like to go swimming, horse riding and to play golf. One child is also independently attending the local youth club. Another has recently been away on a residential trip with cadets. Because of activities like this, children are engaging with others outside of the home, creating additional support networks and, most importantly, they are having fun.

Staff maintain consistent routines and boundaries in the home through positive relationships and reinforcement. Relationships between staff and children are warm, affectionate and reciprocal. Children enjoy being around staff, they are respectful towards them and they listen to advice and guidance provided. Because of these positive routines and relationships, children display improved self-esteem, confidence and self-care.

Staff are innovative in meeting children's needs, promoting imagination and adapting to the needs of each child. For example, one child had become fond of the film 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. Staff ensured he received a 'Wonka bar' which included a golden ticket. Furthermore, to help a child display more age-appropriate behaviours, staff designed his own story book, featuring the child and his soft toy, to help him understand his behaviours and support him to change them in a child-centred way.

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

Since the last inspection there have been no occasions when children have been missing from home. This is because children do not want to leave the home and enjoy spending time in the home engaging with staff and other children. Regardless, the manager ensures staff frequently revisit children's missing-from-home procedures and protocols. Because of this, staff are familiar with these risks and are confident in the event of an incident. These proactive steps help to ensure children's welfare and safety.

It has been necessary for staff to physically intervene when children have displayed behaviours that may result in harm to themselves or others. Records of these incidents are robust and demonstrate that holds are proportionate and appropriate. Children spoken to as part of the inspection understood why physical intervention was necessary and believed it was necessary to ensure their safety. Where there has been an increase in the use of physical intervention, the manager has taken additional steps to identify trends and patterns by completing additional debriefs and further investigation with children. This helps to prevent future incidents and ensure children's well-being.

Protocols and procedures in place to prevent and respond to children's unsafe behaviours are robust and well thought through. They provide staff with explicit guidance on responding to incidents should they occur. They consider each child as an individual and are preventative in nature. This highly effective planning manages and minimises risks both to children and others.

Safety work that is regularly carried out with children ensures that they have a comprehensive understanding of risk. Topics covered are individualised to the child's needs. Sessions are creative and promote engagement and age-appropriate learning. For example, sessions are undertaken with children around racism, stranger danger and appropriate touch. This ensures that children are well informed and aware of dangers before they occur, minimising these risks.

Staff are familiar and confident with the behaviour management techniques documented to help children. They have a sound understanding of children's needs and how they are to help and respond to children at times of crisis. This ensures children receive consistent and agreed support from those caring for them, helping to reduce incidents.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is managed by a well-established, knowledgeable and experienced manager. She is supported by a consistent and long-standing core staff team. Staff feel well supported in their roles by the manager and their colleagues and enjoy working in the home. Staff are rarely absent from work and there has been no need to use temporary or agency staff in the home. Because of this, children receive excellent continuity of care.

Staff and managers regularly remind children of their rights, the procedures in place to support them and the external professionals available to help them. Advocacy for children is good. Unfortunately, there has been one occasion when the manager has not taken all the necessary steps to escalate her concerns for a child in relation to his school setting. This resulted in the child attending a school which is a significant distance away from the home. It also means he has to travel through an area which triggers distressing memories. Additionally, the manager has not raised shortfalls observed in a child's education, health and care (EHC) plan. This means that not all the necessary steps have been taken to engage with the wider system to ensure effective and appropriate plans are in place on these occasions.

Monitoring systems in the home are exceptional. The manager regularly seeks to identify shortfalls in staff practice and knowledge. She does this through creative monthly quizzes, planned observations and robust evaluation and review of incidents. Furthermore, leaders and managers regularly review documents in the home using a series of dedicated monitoring tools and audits. This ensures shortfalls are quickly identified and addressed and that care standards are maintained.

Staff are supported to understand children at a deeper level. The manager uses research to inform practice by providing direct sessions to staff on topics that are important to children. For example, one child underwent a very specific therapy tailored to his current needs. The manager delivered a session to support staff to fully understand this child's experience and the intended outcomes.

Staff and managers ensure parents remain updated and involved in the care of their children. Children are helped to send letters and photos home each month, alongside their usual family time agreements and plans. Furthermore, the manager has been innovative in devising a guide which is specific for parents, which tells them what to expect from the home and what will be in place for their child. The guide is extensive and provides parents with detailed information which alleviates concerns or worries and answer questions.

Consultation with children is a priority. The manager ensures that children's views and wishes are listened to. Children have regular one-to-one time with the manager when she seeks their opinions of the home, the care provided and finds out what is important to them at that time. Furthermore, children are asked to comment on how well individual staff meet their needs and how individual staff make them feel. These discussions help the manager to build strong, trusting relationships with children, gain children's views, identify concerns and directly address children's needs.

## 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, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</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. (Regulation 5 (b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, advocate for children when existing arrangements or plans are likely to have a detrimental impact on their well-being. Seek to escalate concerns where appropriate.</p> | 16 January 2022 |

### Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that for children with special educational needs and disabilities staff must establish whether the child has an EHC plan. If the child does, staff must take account of the health objectives it specifies. Specifically, ensure that children's EHC plans contain input from relevant health services or professionals. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.6)

### 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:** SC034944

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

**Registered provider:** Keys Child Care Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Natalie Yates

**Registered manager:** Maureen Gibbons

## Inspector

Natalie Bennett, Social Care Inspector

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