

# SC374268

Registered provider: Keys Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide residential care for up to three children who have emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since April 2020. She has worked in various roles within the home over many years. She is in the process of completing the National Vocational Qualification level 5.

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.

We last visited this setting on 3 and 4 November 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

### Inspection dates: 14 to 15 July 2021

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 21 August 2019

**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            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 21/08/2019      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 05/09/2018      | Full            | Good                            |
| 12/12/2017      | Full            | Good                            |
| 22/02/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |

## Inspection judgements

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

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home. Two of the children have lived at the home for more than one year and one child moved into the home with a plan to return to the care of their parent. Staff have supported the child's transition plan and advocated on her behalf when plans have needed to change.

Staff understand the progress children have made and talk proudly of children's achievements. Consequently, they support children to understand children's progress in a child-friendly way that suits children's needs and their level of understanding.

There is measurable educational progress for all children. They have all increased their time spent at school, both in duration and attendance. As a result of this, children are receiving a consistent level of education and are increasing their social skills. Schools report good professional relationships with staff and with managers. One headteacher said the communication is 'outstanding'. Social workers and schoolteachers state that staff listen to children, and children's wishes and their feelings are taken into account and that all children have made progress with their education.

Staff support children to have time with their families. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have been creative in ensuring that children continued to meet with their families. At times, this has taken place outside or via video link. Children know their rights, and their entitlements are upheld. Children share their concerns about family time with staff. One child chose not to have contact with his family; he has been well supported by staff to take a break until he wished for it to continue again.

Children in the home are settled; they have good routines, and they know the staff well. Consequently, they are at ease with staff; they share laughter and reciprocal hugs, and they enjoy playing together. One child is musically talented; the staff support his creativity and, because of this, he has recorded some of his songs through a local external project.

Staff encourage children to be themselves and to embrace their individuality. Staff have helped children to decorate their bedroom in a way that reflects their personalities and interests. This helps instil a sense of pride and belonging for children.

Staff ensure children understand their journey and take photographs to capture memories of activities and of special occasions. For example, one child requested a party for their year anniversary at the home. Staff gave the child a surprise party with music, banners and a cake. Staff took photographs of the celebration and these are printed in a memory book.

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

Staff keep children safe. Staff are supported to keep children safe with well-written risk assessments. However, the manager has failed to include a risk assessment or a behaviour management plan for one child who is known to climb onto the banister in the home. Consequently, new staff or staff supporting the home from an agency will not know how to manage this situation safely.

Children do not go missing from the home. However, one child goes missing from school and parental care. Staff have appropriate risk assessments and procedures in place, and they ensure the police, the social workers and the parents are promptly informed. Missing-from-home interviews are routinely conducted. The staff understand the child's pattern of missing behaviours and use the child's wishes and feelings and the key-work sessions to support the child.

Staff know children well; they understand children's individual needs, and how to meet them. Consequently, staff can de-escalate situations using the PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) model of care. When physical intervention is necessary, staff use it as a last resort. Staff and children are debriefed after, and there is management oversight of the incident. The manager completes a reflective analysis of incidents, to understand trends and patterns of behaviour and to review the lessons learnt to inform staff practice.

Children are supported to see a therapist weekly. They are each making progress in trusting adults and in managing to regulate their feelings. Staff also work with the therapist regularly to understand the complex needs of children and to learn how best to support the children. This joined-up working supports staff to further understand the child's journey and needs and, in turn, provides holistic care to children.

Children who spoke with the inspector said that they 'feel safe' and they know how to make a complaint and that they can talk to staff. Children's meetings revisit how children can make complaints to ensure they are aware of their rights. Children also use these meetings to make choices about the activities they do and the foods they eat. One child told the inspector a particular staff member makes the 'best all-day breakfast' for dinner and reeled off what that included with delight.

Staff support children to embrace their individuality, including their ethnicity, their gender curiosity and their sexual orientation. As a result, children have open conversations with staff and feel confident to explore their identity knowing they will always be positively supported.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

There have been failings in the management oversight. These have led to shortfalls in the monitoring and in the reviews of children's care. As a result, some children's bedrooms smell of urine, one carpet is stained with urine and children have slept on

urine-stained mattresses. The manager was quick to order new mattresses for children when the shortfall was identified. One child requires additional storage to help keep their bedroom in good order.

Although there has been some redecoration of the home, further decoration of a good standard is required internally. The garden offers little recreational space for children, and the manager has a plan for this to be remodelled soon.

Managers have failed to scrutinise the statement of purpose. Consequently, information is not factually correct, and it is not clear how to contact external agencies to make a complaint.

Alarms on bedroom doors are used to help keep children safe at night. However, managers have not completed a rigorous assessment of children's needs to support the requirement for this measure. As a result, the alarms have been used unnecessarily, which impacts on a homely environment.

The manager is passionate, is committed and is knowledgeable. She has a positive impact on the staff team, and staff feel able to raise concerns and to seek advice. Members of staff told the inspector that the manager makes the home 'feel like a family home', that she is a 'walking encyclopaedia of knowledge of the children' and all staff praise the changes she has made.

The manager knows the children well. She understands their individual needs and embraces their unique personalities. Consequently, this is cascaded within the staff team and, ultimately, children feel supported to be themselves.

Staff feel well supported; they benefit from regular supervision, and this allows for staff to reflect on their practice and on the care afforded to children. Staff receive appropriate training to support them to care for children. All staff have completed a level 3 diploma for residential childcare.

Where staff practice has fallen short of expected standards, the manager has been quick to address these, and has shared information with the relevant professionals. The local authority designated officer (LADO) reports that the manager acts appropriately, takes immediate action and will make contact for 'advice and consultation'. Consequently, children are effectively safeguarded.

The manager and the staff have positive relationships with external agencies, including social workers, schoolteachers, LADO and a therapist. Social workers report they are kept well informed about children and the communication is 'great'. All professionals speak highly of the manager and the progress that the children have made since living at the home.

## 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>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; and</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(vii))</p> <p>This specially relates to children having suitable clean carpets, mattresses to sleep on, beds in a good condition, and ample storage space, as well as having a well-maintained home to live in and garden to enjoy.</p> | 20 August 2021 |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 20 August 2021 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>This specifically relates to risk assessments when children are known to climb on the stair banister.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                       |
| <p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>(Regulation 16 (1))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring the statement of purpose reflects the conditions of registration correctly, the details of who to contact to make a complaint are clear, the specific protocols are adhered to or omitted if no longer relevant and the statutory guidance referred to is the most recent and up to date.</p> | <p>20 August 2021</p> |

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when using door alarms on children's bedroom doors at night that this is a necessary safeguard. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

## 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:** SC374268

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

**Registered provider:** Keys Care Ltd

**Registered provider address:** C/o Pinsent Masons Llp, The Soloist Building, 1 Lanyon Place, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT1 3LP

**Responsible individual:** Dale Berry

**Registered manager:** Natalie Thompson

## Inspector

Jodie Lewis, Social Care Inspector



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