

# SC374268

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is part of a large national organisation. It provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2020.

**Inspection dates: 18 and 19 December 2024**

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

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

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

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

**Date of last inspection:** 20 March 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 20/03/2024      | Full            | Outstanding                     |
| 21/03/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 14/07/2021      | Full            | Good                            |
| 21/08/2019      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home and two children have moved out.

Children's experiences moving into and out of the home have been mixed. When children have moved out, there has been careful planning to ensure that their experience has been positive. Since leaving the home, children have maintained contact with staff, and they value the relationships that they made during their time there. However, one child moving into the home was not admitted in a planned way and in line with the home's statement of purpose. This could have affected the quality of care provided to the child and the other child living at the home.

Staff and managers support children to achieve their aspirations and dreams. There is an emphasis on children who have had to mature prematurely to embrace typical childhood experiences. Children love to play in the garden and attend clubs and youth groups. This gives children opportunities that they have not previously had and enables them to have fun and develop skills they will need for adulthood.

One child does not have a school placement. This is not a shortfall of the home's managers, who have persistently advocated on behalf of the child. While not in school, staff help the child to have a good routine and engage in educational activities. This will assist with their transition to school when one is identified.

Staff and managers know children well and relationships at the home are positive. Children identify staff and managers as trusted people in their lives and benefit from these relationships.

Children are included in writing their plans and have direct input into their day-to-day care. Meaningful discussions regularly take place with children, which helps them to feel valued and increases engagement.

Staff and managers build effective relationships with children's families. This promotes consistency for children. One parent said that because of the child's move to the home, they are now able to see them more frequently.

Children have personalised and helped to decorate their bedrooms. Communal areas of the home are also well decorated and inviting. However, some aspects of the home are not in keeping with this and maintenance issues have not always been attended to in a timely manner. This includes broken furniture and fence panels being in the grounds of the home. This detracts from what is otherwise a homely and inviting environment.

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

There have been occasions when children have been missing from home. When this happens, staff respond swiftly and attempt to locate children. The manager has been diligent in following up return home interviews in line with statutory guidance and has challenged children's placing authorities when they have not taken place. Learning is taken following any missing-from-care incidents and children are spoken to about the dangers associated with this. This helps children to understand the risks around their behaviour.

Children know how to make complaints and feel comfortable in doing so. One complaint has been made, and this was listened to and addressed appropriately. Child-friendly feedback was provided to the child. This helps children to be active participants in their care and feel able to raise concerns if they need to.

Restraint is used rarely and only as a last resort. The manager has good oversight of these incidents. Risk assessments and plans are updated and provide clear strategies for how staff can prevent and manage risks. This enables a consistent response from staff. Children are spoken to after incidents and supported to understand and manage their feelings and behaviour safely. This helps to reduce the likelihood of incidents happening in the future.

Consequences are rarely used in the home. Instead, staff focus on natural consequences. When consequences are used, they are restorative in nature with an emphasis on helping children to learn more effective strategies for managing their behaviour.

Staff and managers use their relationships with children to help improve their lives. They know children well and can anticipate issues, and children confide in staff. This gives staff the ability to provide education to children and deter them from risky behaviour before it occurs. One child spoke about the manager of the home and said, 'I can tell her anything, my deepest thoughts.'

Checks for new staff working at the home have not always been robust enough, with a discrepancy on one staff member's work history not being properly investigated. This failed to ensure that all the necessary information was known about the staff member to assure managers they were suitable to be working in the home. The manager accepted at this inspection that this is a shortfall and has plans to address this.

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

The registered manager is experienced and suitably qualified for her role. She is supported by a deputy manager, who is also suitably experienced and qualified. Together, they make an effective team. Staff are unanimously positive about them, and they are highly regarded by their team.

The manager has a variety of monitoring systems to ensure that she has effective oversight of the home. Children's records are clear and well organised. Some records are written to the child. This will support children to reflect positively on their experience at the home if they choose to access their records later.

Staff receive regular practice-related supervision and appraisal of their work. The organisation provides a varied training package for the staff. New staff receive a thorough induction to the home and spend time getting to know children before they are given responsibilities over their care. This helps staff feel valued and improves the quality of care provided to children.

Team meetings take place regularly and include in-depth discussions about children's needs and how these are being met. The manager ensures that communication is effective between staff. This ensures that children benefit from consistent and well-planned care.

## 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, The 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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home;</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.<br/>(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(d))</p> | 12 March 2025 |

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that emergency admissions are not accepted unless the home's statement of purpose and its capacity and support systems mean that it has the capability to care for children admitted at very short notice while continuing to offer high-quality care to children already living in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.6)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a homely, domestic environment. In particular, they should ensure that maintenance issues are attended to promptly and seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

## **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 Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Gemma Moore

**Registered manager:** Natalie Thompson

## Inspector

Chrisoula Contoyianni, Social Care Inspector



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