

SC374268

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

The registered manager has been in post since April 2020. She has a level 5 diploma qualification in leadership and management for residential childcare.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 March 2024

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2023	Full	Good
14/07/2021	Full	Good
21/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/09/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are happy and settled in their home and say they feel loved. Their favourite things about the home are their personalised bedrooms and the staff. One child described the staff as 'just brilliant'.

Children are at the heart of everything staff do. A particular strength of the home is the extremely positive relationships that children and staff share. Staff encourage children to be curious and ask questions which helps them to explore their identity, sexuality, and culture. Due to these positive experiences, children are thriving and are gaining confidence.

Children's links with their families are highly valued and this helps children to maintain links with people who are important to them. Staff go above and beyond to help children learn about their family histories and to make the time they spend with their families positive.

Children's talents and achievements are encouraged and celebrated. One child is a skilled artist, and their artwork is displayed around the home for everyone to enjoy. Another child loves music and records songs in a professional music studio which has an extremely positive impact on their wellbeing. A staff member described their talent as, 'amazing' and went on to say, 'I feel very proud.'

Children are developing their independent living skills. One child has created their own independence plan which is helping them to reach important milestones as they prepare for semi-independent living. This gives children belief in their abilities and helps them to prepare well for adulthood.

Staff use creative strategies to support children to reframe their thoughts and feelings which supports children to attend health appointments. For example, they make sure one child does not have to wait in a waiting room, and they always see a familiar health professional. As a result, children's health needs are met which is a significant achievement.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are considered in all aspects of their care. Care plans and records are child centred and of an excellent quality. This means children's plans are helpful to them and support them to achieve their goals.

The staff team are extremely compassionate and caring. A child's relative commented, 'The staff and manager are brilliant. They are patient and give her time to process things. She is gaining in confidence and is happy at the home. She is doing really well.' All professionals spoke about the vast progress children are making. One social worker commented, 'Children are loved. I would place any child at this home. The care is amazing.'

Children who have previously struggled to attend education are making lots of progress. Managers and staff work very closely with education professionals to overcome any barriers to learning. When necessary, the manager advocates and challenges decisions made to ensure that children continue to achieve good educational outcomes. This significantly contributes to the progress children are making.

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

Children say they feel safe at the home. Staff are clear about their responsibilities to protect children and they have an excellent understanding of the risks that children may face. Children's individual risk assessments and plans are very detailed which shows how well staff know each child. The information is continually reviewed and updated which enables staff to keep children as safe as possible.

Children benefit from high-quality direct work sessions with staff which helps them to manage their feelings and emotions. In addition, the effective and consistent use of boundaries further supports children to self-regulate their behaviours. As a result, the number of incidents involving children has significantly decreased.

Due to the trusting relationship's children have with staff, they very rarely go missing from home. Detailed individualised missing protocols are in place and staff fully understand the procedures to follow should a child go missing.

Staff are proactive and use their skills and experience to creatively respond to risks and de-escalate incidents quickly. Therefore, physical intervention is used as a last resort to keep the children safe. Incidents are reviewed by the manager to help them assess what happened before, during and after the incident. Conversations are held with the children to gain their perspective of what was happening for them at that time. This helps to identify trends and triggers for the children, which enables successful strategies to be put in place.

When incidents occur the focus on learning to improve outcomes for children is excellent. For example, staffing levels were increased in response to a child feeling unsettled. This shows the child was listened to and means they have a trusted adult they can talk to if they feel anxious or upset. This contributes to the child feeling a sense of safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Children are extremely fond of the experienced and dedicated manager who leads the home. Her influence and approach create a nurturing, happy and loving environment in which children flourish and are making excellent progress. A social worker described the manager as, 'exceptional.'

The manager is ambitious for children, she knows them and their needs in intricate detail. She has exemplary oversight of all aspects of their care. The staff team share a passion for excellent child-focused care. There is a strong sense of togetherness and the stable and settled team means children receive care from staff they know and trust.

Strong multi-agency working supports children's progress. The manager and staff maintain effective communication with other professionals to support excellent outcomes for children. A college tutor described the communication between the home and themselves as, 'fantastic'. The manager advocates strongly for children to make sure their voices are heard. She is tenacious in ensuring that any decisions about children are well planned and in their best interests.

Staff are overwhelmingly complimentary about their manager, and they hold her leadership in high regard. They feel exceptionally well supported and proud to work at the home. They feel highly valued and can access a range of development opportunities.

A strong reflective learning culture firmly underpins staff practice. Staff receive frequent supervision that provides them with time and space to reflect on their work. Staff say they are continually encouraged to think about how their practice can support children even more. Regular team meetings take place and provide staff with great opportunities to share important information with each other and generate new ideas.

The manager uses research to inform staff practice to benefit the children. For example, her research and liaison with a national leading charity has resulted in the creation of a bespoke autism sensory plan. She recognises that this will further enhance the quality-of-care children receive. This means that children's care is innovative.

The manager ensures that staff receive an effective induction and high-quality training. This supports staff to have an in-depth understanding of children and provides them with the skills and knowledge to care for children well. As a result, children receive optimum care.

Management monitoring tools and reviewing systems are extremely organised and effective. There is clear evidence of thorough management oversight across all areas of the home. This helps the manager to understand the strengths of the home, areas for development and continually learn.

No requirements or recommendations were made at this inspection.

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

Amy Richards, Social Care Inspector

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