

SC452009

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for one child who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

A new manager is in role but is not yet registered with Ofsted.

**Visit dates:** 16 to 17 September 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 19 June 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Requires improvement to be good

## Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

## **The care of children**

Relationships between the child and care staff are warm and nurturing. Staff who contributed to this assurance visit spoke about the child's progress akin to that of a proud parent. The child told the inspector, 'I love living at this home, the staff are the best. They help me when I get upset and angry. The staff also help me with my school work.'

The manager and staff team are well informed about the child's life experiences. They use this knowledge effectively to meet her daily needs. As a result, the child has confidence and trust in the adults that care for her.

Staff ensure that activities are age appropriate and that they stimulate the child's health and well-being. The child's personal interests are always considered. Staff make good use of the local resources, and opportunities to explore the outdoor woodlands and caring for animals are plentiful.

Staff recognise how important maintaining regular contact with family members is for the child. Since moving into this home, opportunities to talk to and see family members face to face have improved significantly. Good use has been made of telephone and video calls. Since the lockdown restrictions have eased, the child enjoys and benefits from having weekly face-to-face visits with family members who are important to her.

The manager and team prioritise the child's educational needs. However, despite the team's hard work, local authorities have not identified an education provision or provided a formal education package. The manager has taken appropriate steps to escalate her concerns to both authorities and is maintaining regular contact with the virtual school head. In the interim, the manager and team are providing home tuition. They have made good use of online and educational resources.

Sanctions used for unwanted behaviour are rare. However, when they are used, they are not always restorative or effective. They do not provide the child with an opportunity for her to learn from or take responsibility for her behaviour.

Care and behaviour support plans provide extensive information about the child's past behaviours and needs. Despite being regularly reviewed, these plans do not provide staff with clear, concise and current information, nor do they clearly set out the placing authority's aims and objectives.

## **The safety of children**

A parent and professionals report that, in their view, the child is safe living here. The manager and staff are clear about their role and responsibilities to ensure the child feels and is kept safe. Staff are not risk averse; they support the child well and provide opportunities for her to take age-appropriate risks. The child told the inspector that she feels safe and she has lots of safe spaces she can go to. She said that she sleeps much better at this home.

Since the last inspection, there have been three reported allegations. The manager's response to these concerns safeguarded the child. Good working relationships have been established with safeguarding agencies. The introduction of a joint-working agreement and revised behaviour management strategies have resulted in a reduction of incidents and allegations being made.

Risk assessments provide staff with detailed information about how to identify, manage and mitigate risks. Strategies and the desired outcomes are clearly defined. The team make good use of advice and support provided by the on-call duty manager and take effective action to manage behavioural incidents.

The records relating to six physical interventions reported to have been used confirm that interventions are proportionate and only used as a last resort. Following these incidents, the views and experiences of the child are sought and the manager uses this information to enable the staff to reflect on their practice and to review behaviour management strategies. The manager's monitoring of these incidents are evaluative and effective.

## **Leaders and managers**

Since the last inspection, a new manager and staff team have been recruited. The manager is suitably qualified and experienced to undertake her role. Her registration with Ofsted is in progress.

The newly appointed team of four care staff have completed the organisation's induction programme and basic mandatory training. Leaders and managers have assessed that the new staff team has the skills and abilities to meet the child's needs.

The manager demonstrates strong leadership skills. She has a good understanding of the team's strengths and weaknesses and provides the team with the support, direction and development opportunities it needs to fulfil its role and responsibilities effectively. Team meetings, formal supervisions and clinical consultations are used effectively. Staff say that they find these sessions helpful and informative.

The manager's oversight and monitoring are effective. One of her strengths is her ability to reflect, evaluate and analyse records. When discrepancies or poor use of terminology are identified, she takes appropriate action to address them.

All staff place the child's needs at the centre of their practice. They share a collective vision and drive to enhance the quality of care and support they provide. The home's improvement plan details actions taken and those proposed to develop the services provided for children.

## **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          |
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| <p>8: The education standard</p> <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement.</p> <p>(Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(vi))</p> <p>In particular, continue to escalate concerns with the placing authority to ensure an education plan and provision is identified.</p> | <p>23/11/2020</p> |
| <p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home;</p> <p>that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)2(f))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>23/11/2020</p> |

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| In particular, ensure that care plans and behaviour management plans are clear, concise and relevant, to ensure that all staff are provided with clear instructions on how to meet the young people's current needs. |  |
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## Recommendations

- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC452009

**Registered provider:** Keys Cwc Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Keys Ltd, Maybrook House, Queensway, Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

**Responsible individual:** Gemma Moore

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector

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