

1246521

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. It provides care for up to 14 children across 2 houses. One house is for children aged between 5 and 12, and the other is for children aged between 7 and 18. The home supports children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 13 children were living at the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2019.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and we are currently checking this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 11 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2025	Full	Outstanding
31/01/2024	Full	Outstanding
06/09/2022	Full	Good
22/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children thrive at this home and make excellent progress from their starting points. Children's relationships with staff are trusting and exceptionally strong. Interactions between children and staff are built on kindness and humour. This helps children to feel valued and respected.

The home environment is vibrant, child centred and thoughtfully designed, with hand-painted murals that reflect children's individuality. Children spoke confidently about the meaning behind the artwork. This creative and personalised approach strengthens children's sense of belonging.

Staff understand and implement the home's statement of purpose through their unwavering commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children. Their tenacity and determined approach directly influence the coordinated support and informed care that children receive. One professional described the home as 'brilliant', stating that staff offer 'consistency, routine and exceptional care' to children.

Staff and leaders offer unwavering support to children to help them engage and achieve in education. One child who was not in education when they arrived is now a school ambassador. Children participate in a range of hobbies and speak proudly about their achievements and awards.

Children have plenty of opportunities to share their views and are regularly consulted about the care that they receive. The sensitive and creative way that staff capture children's voices in records is admirable. This approach ensures that records provide a full picture of children's care experiences, which will be beneficial should they wish to access their records in the future.

Staff support children to spend time with their family members and other people who are important to them. Meticulous child-led care planning improves children's life chances. Some children have had successful moves to foster families, and some have been able to return to live with their own family. One child's social worker said they 'truly believe the home has made a real difference' to the child's outcomes.

Children benefit from thoughtful support that helps them to learn about different cultures and religions, strengthening their understanding and respect for one another. Staff proactively build on their own knowledge and skills to ensure that each child's cultural needs are met effectively. Children's confidence and self-esteem improve as a result.

Staff prioritise children's health and wellbeing. All children receive regular health reviews to ensure that their physical and emotional needs are fully met.

Children experience a variety of activities, both inside and outside of the home. They excitedly talked about celebrating birthdays and festivities together. Children also value supporting charity events together with staff. As a result, they develop shared memories and build healthy relationships with others.

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

The safeguarding culture in the home is strong and there is a clear focus on children's safety and wellbeing. Children say that they feel safe and have a trusted adult that they would talk to if they had any worries or concerns. Children have access to an independent advocate to support them should they wish to make a complaint.

When children are struggling to manage their emotions and are demonstrating this through their behaviour, staff confidently support them, in line with their care and support plans. Incident recording is detailed and oversight by managers is timely. Reparation is prioritised, which enables friendships to be rebuilt and lessons to be learned.

Children are encouraged to take age-appropriate risks. Staff proactively assess and review children's vulnerabilities and the measures in place to reduce these. Risk plans are detailed and provide clear guidance for staff about how to keep children safe. This has contributed to a significant reduction in the need for the use of physical restraint and a noticeable decrease in significant incidents.

Excellent communication with partnership agencies promotes a cohesive and coordinated approach to safeguarding. External professionals reported that prompt and effective information-sharing has enabled children to be kept safe and that decisions about their care planning have been well informed.

Allegations about staff conduct are meticulously investigated and managed, in line with policies and procedures. All staff promote an open learning culture. Frequent workshops, led by the registered manager, support the learning ethos in the home. This strengthens reflection and promotes the development of staff.

Children benefit from regular and ad hoc key-work sessions. These address a range of topics important to children, including safe relationships and online safety. Timely oversight by managers ensures that any concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by a dedicated and inspirational registered manager who leads by example. The deputy managers have a pivotal role in sustaining this high standard of leadership. The leadership team's collective commitment and shared belief in children's potential are central to the consistently excellent outcomes achieved.

Staff morale is high because of the culture of openness and genuine respect and support for one another. Staff said that they enjoy working in a highly efficient and well-managed environment. This enables them to carry out their duties with due diligence and to the exceptionally high standard reported by other professionals.

All staff receive regular practice-focused supervision, and their performance and suitability for the role are formally appraised at least once a year. There is a strong focus on supporting staff development, which contributes to high staff retention. This provides stability for children.

Staff are highly skilled. They have access to suitable training and resources and hold the necessary and appropriate qualifications essential to meeting the needs of the children. There is a strong culture of reflection and learning within the staff team. Regular and well-attended team meetings are used to further broaden the staff team's knowledge and discuss topical issues and any emerging concerns.

Highly effective monitoring systems and quality assurance processes provide the registered manager with a clear understanding of the home's operation. This enables the leaders to identify themes and trends that inform the development of staff and support children's progress.

Exceptionally strong working relationships with partner agencies enables an effective approach to children's care planning. Professionals are unanimous in the view that communication is excellent and that the way staff advocate for children is highly effective.

The registered manager's own quality of care review demonstrates that senior leaders have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development.

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: 1246521

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Keys Group, Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway, Halesowen B63 4AH

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Abbie Manning

Inspectors

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector
Glen Strowbridge, Social Care Inspector

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