

2507631

Registered provider: Keys Educational Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large, private provider. It can provide care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home. Two of the children were temporarily staying away from the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2024.

Inspection date: 11 March 2025

Date of last inspection: 28 May 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

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

Since the last inspection, one child has moved on from the home and two children have moved in. For one of the children who has moved in, there have been a high number of missing-from-home incidents. The home worked with other professionals and the local authority and arranged for an activity-based intervention to meet the child's needs.

Three of the children said that they like their home and rated it as either nine or ten out of ten. They all said that they like their bedrooms, and one child is eager to return to the home after their activity break. One child was not contactable during the inspection.

The home environment is now welcoming and homely. Children's bedrooms are clean and personalised to them. Photos of the children are on display throughout the home. One child had moved in a few days before the inspection and photos of them were already in place, helping them to feel more at home. Children have been supported to keep their rooms tidy. Toiletries and personal hygiene products are easily accessible for all children.

Support for children to have healthy sleep routines has improved. Routines are in place for the younger children and staff know how to settle them for the night. Staff encourage the older children to have healthy routines and make efforts to get them involved in education and activities, with mixed success. Quick reference guides quickly help staff to know how to support children and provide consistency of care for them.

Children's progress and experiences continue to be variable. One child has made significant progress with education and has returned to school full time. Children's educational information is available, and staff have agreed on ways to support children to attend and engage in education. For one child, attending education has been difficult. Staff have supported this child well with work experience opportunities.

Responses to children going missing from the home are thorough. Staff are proactive in searching for children and they contact them persistently when they do not return to the home as expected. Staff know the processes to follow. The manager has been professionally curious and has explored the reasons for children leaving the home. Return home interviews take place, and the learning and key themes are identified.

Leaders and managers made quick decisions when there was acknowledgement that the home was not able to fully meet one child's needs, and a plan is in place for this child to return.

When children raise concerns about staff practice, the manager is quick to respond and safeguarding agencies are appropriately informed. Children are supported by staff to understand the outcomes.

Children know how to make a complaint, and they are responded to sensitively. There is now a system in place to capture less serious complaints to ensure these are not lost.

Leaders and managers have worked on developing consistent routines for children and clear guidance for staff on how to support them. There have been changes within the staff team. Staff spoken with say that these changes have improved the atmosphere and that the home feels more 'homely' and organised. Agency staff have been used at times but this has been reduced more recently, with bank staff being used. The manager has also carried out reflective work to explore the reasons for staff leaving.

Systems are in place to oversee children's care, and the manager analyses serious incidents and reflects on the learning from them. Training to meet children's particular needs has taken place to upskill the staff team, particularly in relation to missing-from-home and county lines training. Actions have been taken since the last inspection to address some of the requirements made. Three requirements have been met and two remain.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/05/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/10/2022	Full	Good
23/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; 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; and help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(viii)(x))	01 May 2025

In particular, the registered person should support staff to provide care to children that promotes their educational attendance and achievement. When children are not attending full-time education, staff should engage them in suitable structured activities that promote their learning and development. This should also support children to build their confidence and help them to reintegrate into formal education. This requirement has been restated from the previous inspection.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority’s or a relevant person’s performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)) In particular, the registered person should challenge the placing local authority when there are delays in decision-making or shortfalls that are having an impact on caring for children.	01 May 2025

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2507631

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Educational Services Limited

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway,
Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Jenna Hydes

Registered manager: Ann-Marie Pollard

Inspector

Nickie Doney, Social Care Inspector

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