

# 2596476

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to 4 children who may have emotional, behavioural or emotional difficulties.

There were 4 children living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspector observed all 4 children and spoke to 2.

One child has moved out of the home. One child has moved in.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2024.

### Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2026

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <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:** 29 July 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 29/07/2024      | Full            | Good                            |
| 25/07/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 21/06/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 09/02/2022      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |

## Inspection judgements

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

The home is large, well decorated and furnished, providing a comfortable environment for children to live in. Staff have created areas designed specifically for children including a cinema room and a gaming room. Children enjoy using these spaces. Staff have supported children to personalise their bedrooms. One child has a pet cat. The children develop a sense of belonging and feel assured that their preferences are important.

Staff helped a child move into the home. They spoke to the children already living at the home about the child moving in. When the child moved in, staff provided a warm reception and gave the child a welcome pack. Staff have registered the child with local health services and have started to approach schools about education. A professional said that the child had settled in well due to staff being clear about expectations, while allowing time and flexibility for adjustment. Staff supported another child to move to a different home. They created detailed plans to ensure the move went smoothly. These plans included visiting the new home with the child and working with the new staff team to share key information about the child's care. When the child moved, the staff remained in contact with them to help the child settle into their new home. The support provided by staff meant the child's move was successful.

Staff prioritise children's education. This support has meant a child has been able to move from alternative provision to mainstream education. Another child is now preparing to complete their GCSE's, something that wasn't previously anticipated. If children are not in education, staff provide home learning tailored to the child's interests.

Staff promote children's wellbeing and help children to access services to support their health. Staff have been creative in supporting a child to develop a healthier diet through offering a range of options at mealtimes. Staff support opportunities for children to have meaningful time with their families.

Staff are committed to building trusting relationships with children and supporting them to build trust in others. This has supported children to develop relationships with friends and family. Staff encourage children to take part in activities. One child is a member of 2 football clubs and another child enjoys travelling to conventions. Staff talk with children about their life experiences and help to make sense of them. The placing authority has created a life-story narrative for a child. Staff are adapting this story to ensure the narrative will be meaningful to the child and shared in a therapeutic way.

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

Staff have developed clear structure, routine and boundaries at the home. They do not use consequences to support children's behaviour. Instead, staff create incentives and rewards to encourage positive behaviour. In addition to this, children's achievements are celebrated and rewarded. Staff have monthly 'lad chats' with the children who are all boys. These conversations are specifically related to being male. Topics include men's mental and physical health, how to be safe in the community and education about healthy relationships. This approach is encouraging positive role modelling and identity. It also helps children know how to navigate gender specific challenges.

Staff know how to respond when children go missing from the home. They locate the child and help them to return safely. Staff offer care to the child once they have returned and talk to them about why they went missing. Staff work collaboratively with professionals to support children who go missing. At times, staff search children's bedrooms if they are worried about their welfare. Staff tell children when their room has been searched and the reasons why. However, these searches are not always recorded.

Staff hold children when required to keep them safe when there is no other alternative. Staff ensure children are spoken to after they have been held. Staff speak to children about their thoughts and feelings and help children to develop positive strategies to manage any distress. This has helped a child manage their emotions safely for a sustained period.

Staff create plans to develop children's independence that reflect the child's stage of development, including their ability to stay safe. These plans support children to spend time in the community with friends and to use the internet and social media safely, while allowing some autonomy and independence.

Staff have developed risk management plans for children. However, one child's plan did not reflect their needs and therefore was not a protective measure. Staff do not consistently follow these plans, which means safeguarding procedures are sometimes missed. On one occasion, staff failed to follow a plan and a member of the public came to harm. When there have been significant incidents, staff have not always informed safeguarding agencies within requisite times.

When children make allegations, staff listen and notify managers. Managers consider the safeguards needed to keep children and staff safe. Managers notify professionals and follow advice given. On one occasion managers decided not to investigate an allegation based on unreliable information. This undermines the agreed safeguarding procedures.

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

The manager demonstrates high aspirations for every child. This has resulted in a motivated staff team. A member of staff said, 'The manager is incredibly supportive, and always encourages us to do our best.' The manager provides staff with regular team

meetings. However, the team meetings do not have clearer agendas and actions. The manager is aware of this and has plans to improve the format.

The manager and staff have positive relationships with professionals. Professionals said communication from the staff team and manager is excellent. The manager is a strong advocate for children. They escalate concerns promptly when they identify other professionals are not meeting their responsibilities towards a child.

The staff benefit from regular supervision sessions which focus on staff wellbeing, practice and children. In recognition of new staff joining the team the manager has introduced a coaching approach. The manager ensures staff access training to provide them with skills and knowledge to meet children's needs. To complement this the manager provides staff with workshops. The manager supports staff to gain qualifications that support their roles. This means the staff team are continually developing.

The manager has taken a creative approach to recruiting a full staff team. The children are cared for by staff who bring a diverse range of skills, experiences and backgrounds to the home. The stability of the staff team means children are cared for by those who know them. However, safer recruitment practice is not consistent when staff start at the home.

The manager reviews incidents and children's records. The reviews identify areas of good practice and shortfalls. However, this does not always lead to improved staff practice. The manager has no system in place to monitor the care provided to children. Therefore, opportunities are missed to identify areas for improvement and to evaluate whether actions taken to improve practice have a positive impact.

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Due date    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii) (b))</p> | 3 June 2026 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 3 June 2026 |

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(g)(h))

## Recommendations

- The registered person should set out in regulations 31-33 and is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered persons should seek to involve the local authority and other relevant persons whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.4)

## 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:** 2596476

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Keys Child Care Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Emma Hemmings

**Registered manager:** Mark Dodds

## Inspector

Laura Copus, Social Care Inspector



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