

2717528

Registered provider: Central and Southern Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides long-term care for up to 4 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

Two children are currently living in the home and were present during the inspection. No children have moved in or out of the home since the last inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 28 November 2025.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 July 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/07/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/12/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
02/09/2024	Full	Inadequate
29/08/2023	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children make positive progress from their starting points, supported by staff and a manager who know them well. Most children are engaged in education and are supported to access opportunities effectively. Staff demonstrate the skills needed to support children and help them develop independence.

Leaders and managers show a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children. Staff speak positively about the leadership and support they have received since the changes in leadership and management occurred in February 2026. Ongoing training ensures staff are well equipped to meet children's needs.

Staff, families and professionals speak positively about the home and the impact it has on children's progress and development.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide care for children that is both individualised and responsive, taking full account of each child's unique needs, experiences and starting points. Care planning reflects a strong understanding that children arrive with different histories and levels of emotional development, and varying degrees of resilience, and staff adapt their approach accordingly to promote stability, safety and progress. Both children spoke positively about their home.

External professionals highlighted that they have positive relationships with the staff team. One social worker stated that the child they support has 'thrived' since living in the home. Children are supported to see and communicate with people who are important to them, and family time is prioritised by the home. One parent believes their child is doing well, although they would like more detailed weekly feedback. The manager has identified that communication and relationships with children's families could be improved, and there are plans in place to address this.

Children are supported to feel a sense of belonging and stability in the home. Both children have lived there for a significant length of time, with one child residing in the home for nearly 3 years, which supports their sense of permanence. While recent staffing changes have had some impact, the manager continues to work with staff in an effort to maintain consistency.

One child continues to regularly attend their education provision and is doing well. Another child has recently stopped attending school; however, they have been supported within the home to access educational activities and there is a clear plan in place. Staff have not consistently engaged the child in the plan. However, this continues to be addressed by the manager. Overall, staff have been successful in encouraging the

child to work with the plan and this has led to them completing some fun and engaging activities.

Staff practice has improved, overall. They understand how to support children's emotional wellbeing, which has resulted in positive changes for children, as well as them now being able to access more specialist therapeutic support. Staff show increased consideration for children's wishes and feelings. For example, both children have now been provided with support to help understand their life stories and experiences prior to moving into the home.

Children are supported to prepare for the future through clear plans that set out graduated goals focused on building independence. These goals enable children to access positive experiences and activities in the wider community.

Overall, the home is well maintained, warm and homely. While most areas are well cared for, some outdoor spaces would benefit from improved maintenance to ensure they offer a fully nurturing area for children to play and spend time in.

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

Staff show a good understanding of the children's needs and risks and have developed positive relationships with them. Although boundaries are not always applied consistently, work is ongoing within the team to strengthen this practice. Overall, children appear comfortable and settled, and staff interactions are consistently empathic, respectful and supportive, helping to build relationships based on trust.

Staff's understanding and response to children's mental health needs have improved. When safety concerns are identified, staff take appropriate action to help keep children safe. Staff's responses are generally caring and nurturing, and these responses have helped to reduce the overall number of incidents taking place in the home.

Physical interventions have been used to keep children safe and are applied in a proportionate and least restrictive way. Following incidents, children are supported to reflect. If children struggle to engage, staff use alternative approaches, such as varying the time of discussions, using different staff members and employing visual tools to help them to express their feelings.

The manager and staff have strengthened their understanding and response to internet safety in the home. Robust safety measures are in place to regularly check and manage the content the children are accessing, and staff speak with children about how to stay safe online. Staff have developed and carried out specific pieces of work with children to further enhance this knowledge.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has an excellent knowledge of the needs of the children living in the home and she is ambitious and proactive in supporting these needs. Staff practice is closely monitored by the manager and senior leaders. Any inconsistencies in care are directly addressed with staff and support is put in place.

The manager understands the progress children have made and explores any barriers that hinder their development. For example, when one child stopped attending school, the manager was proactive and persistent in gaining support from education professionals. When agreed education plans fell short, the manager swiftly addressed this, and plans were amended to meet the child's changing needs.

Staff report feeling well supported in their roles and describe a significant improvement in guidance and leadership since the appointment of the new senior manager and registered manager. Supervision is regular, detailed and reflective, and is further strengthened by access to additional therapeutic reflective support from the organisation's in-house therapy team.

Staff receive training that supports their development and enables them to carry out their roles effectively. Although there has been a period of high staff turnover, there are signs that a more stable and settled team is now beginning to embed. The provider has been proactive in seeking to fill vacancies in the home and has attempted to maintain some level of consistency for the children.

The manager has a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development, with plans in place to address these effectively. Leaders and managers recognise that this is an ongoing process, particularly given the number of newer staff and the changing needs of the children.

External professionals comment on the positive progress children have made while living in the home, and say that they believe communication from the staff and manager is effective. When external agencies' responses fall short of expectations, the manager provides appropriate professional challenge to ensure the needs of children are met.

The children are involved in daily decision-making in the home, and this is evident from observations of staff practice and records. Both children also have advocates whom they can readily access for support.

Overall, improvements in leadership and management have had a notably positive impact on the quality of care provided to children living in the home.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that for the children's home to be a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children, it should be a homely, domestic environment. This includes the provision of a clean and well-kept garden which provides an inviting space for children to play in. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that where children placed in the home are not participating in education, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable, structured activities. Children should be included in the plans in respect of these activities and be informed prior to each day of what they will be undertaking, to encourage engagement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

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: 2717528

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Central and Southern Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 29 Thorneycroft Lane, Downhead Park, Milton Keynes MK15 9BB

Responsible individual: Natalie Pink-Hines

Registered manager: Lauren Williams-Carr

Inspectors:

Helen Cushnie, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Darren Wickens, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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