

2815249

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is a privately owned children's home, registered to care for up to four children up to the age of 18 years. There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

This is the first inspection since the home and manager were registered with Ofsted in January 2025.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 April 2025

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	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive exceptional, individualised care and support. Staff understand the children's day-to-day experiences and the children are involved in every aspect of their care planning.

When children move into the home, this is well planned and child focused, and children's needs are considered well. All children said that they felt welcome when moving into the home. One child spoke about how impressed they were about their welcome party.

Staff have a great understanding of children's communication styles, and they have developed positive, nurturing relationships with the children. Staff use playfulness in their interactions with the children. Children mirror this playfulness in their interactions with each other, which is helping them to build positive relationships with each other. One child said, 'This is such a chilled home; everyone is calm and lovely. I want to stay here until I get my own place.'

Staff demonstrate exceptional parenting skills when helping the children to access support services or enjoy their preferred activities. This has contributed to all children making excellent progress from their starting points when they moved into the home. The manager is a strong advocate for children and ensures that they have the help and support they need. She has successfully commissioned private drug support services, advocated for bail conditions to be appropriately varied to better fit a child's individual circumstances and needs, and helped a child to prepare to join their favourite sport at a professional level.

Children know how to complain, and their views are considered by staff. The children said that they feel comfortable talking to staff about things they want to change or they are not happy about. 'Children's voices' meetings are held regularly, and staff take the children's wishes seriously.

The children's educational needs are supported effectively, depending on their individual needs and circumstances. When children move into the home, finding a suitable education placement is prioritised and staff work in collaboration with the virtual school. The manager has commissioned a private tutor from the company's own educational resources to support children's learning when this is needed. The children welcome this additional help. Both school staff and the private tutor gave excellent feedback about the care and support provided to the children by staff.

All the children are healthy. Staff support them to attend their primary health appointments. Children take their medication independently but are prompted and monitored by staff.

Staff facilitate family time in line with the children's wishes and feelings whenever possible and consistent with their needs. When family time is supervised, children understand why this arrangement is in place. Children can bring their friends to visit. One child said they liked that the home was 'just like a normal family home and it does not feel embarrassing if people come over'.

Independence is a concept that is valued by the children in this home. Staff trust children to manage a certain budget per week, and the children take this seriously. The children can complete their weekly shopping independently and are proud of their acquired skills, whether this is decorating their bedroom, having the cleanest bathroom, or cooking the best steak. The children are at different stages in terms of their progress, but observing each other's skills motivates them to improve. Staff balance the children's independence with a nurturing approach.

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

All children have formed good relationships with staff. Children can identify at least one trusted member of staff who they can discuss their concerns and worries with. One child said that 'everyone is approachable and caring'. Another child said, 'It's like a big family where you can ask your Nan for some help and your older cousin for some advice.'

Children say that they feel safe, and staff keep them increasingly safe. Staff have appropriate safeguarding training, with a sufficient number trained to take a lead in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns. This ensures that staff know what action to take should a safeguarding incident happen. There is regular communication with the children's social workers when planning for support or in emergency situations. The manager has made connections in the local community and has identified safe places for children to go if they are unable to reach the home safely and they need help while in the community.

Staff's support to children is guided by clear and individualised risk assessments. Whenever possible, risk assessments are completed in consultation with the children. This helps the children to engage with their support plans to reduce any risks, reflect on their behaviours and identify the support they need. The culture is one of constant learning, in which children are encouraged to learn from incidents if things do not go as planned.

When considering the right support, staff are sensible to children's lived experiences. Staff help children to gain a better understanding of their own needs. This motivates the children to address their behaviours in an effective and meaningful way. For example, following a conflict mediation session between two children, one child identified behaviour patterns that they wanted to change and asked for support. The child said that staff 'understand me and help me understand where I am at with my progress'.

Staff provide children with individualised support. This includes teaching them about the risks associated with criminal and sexual exploitation, commissioning drug support

services if needed, and completing self-esteem work, which is helping children to become more confident.

There has been no need for physical intervention to be used since the home was opened. Allegations and missing-from-home incidents are low. When these do happen, they are addressed in line with risk assessments. In addition to services provided by partner agencies and in the community, staff and children benefit from good specialist services that are provided by the company that runs the home, when they need them.

Staff supervise children's family time when needed. On one occasion, there were insufficient safeguards in place during family time. This was due to miscommunication between the social worker and the manager, and mistakes made by a member of staff. The circumstances were immediately investigated. The arrangements were clarified with the social worker, and safer arrangements were put in place. The incident was reported to Ofsted and the local authority's designated officer, in line with the safeguarding procedures. Further training and reflective work were completed with all staff. There have been no further incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced and permanent manager. The deputy manager is a new deputy and is an experienced member of staff. Both the manager and the deputy manager have high aspirations for children, and they talk passionately about the children's progress.

The manager and deputy manager's presence in the home is valued by both staff and children. Staff are mostly new to children's social care and are provided with strong and effective guidance that is helping them to learn and develop. The quality of this management guidance and the strength of management oversight of practice is helping to ensure high-quality care and safeguarding that the children benefit from, despite the relative inexperience of the staff group. The manager and the deputy manager are supported by an experienced responsible individual and, together, they support the staff. The manager benefits from quality assurance visits from someone within the organisation to regularly monitor the quality of care provided to children.

Staff say that the training and management support is invaluable, and it forms a good foundation to enable them to safely care for the children. The training relates to statutory standards of care and themes that are current and relevant to the children's culture and age. The manager leads by example, and staff are enthusiastic and committed to following in his footsteps when supporting the children.

The manager uses learning from practice to improve the children's experience and support staff.

The physical environment is maintained at a high standard and the children are proud of the home they live in.

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

Recommendation

- There may be circumstances where the children's home's manager assesses that the restriction of family time is necessary in the interests of the child to safeguard them or promote their welfare. These arrangements should be agreed by the social work team and the children's home's manager should be guided by the placing authority, where possible, except in an emergency situation, where the placing authority must be notified within 24 hours. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.16)

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: 2815249

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Zoe Tompkins

Registered manager: Alex Emery

Inspector

Claudia Poienar, Social Care Inspector

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