

SC026991

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 owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to 4 children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, the home was providing care for 4 children, and all children spoke to the inspector about their experiences of living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2017.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 April 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: 28 April 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/04/2025	Full	Good
24/06/2024	Full	Good
23/05/2023	Full	Good
14/06/2022	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children are making good progress and receive care that is warm, consistent and tailored to their individual needs. Staff know the children well and use trusting relationships to help them feel safe.

Staff respond effectively to children's emotional and safety needs. They recognise changes in children's presentation and provide support that helps children manage their feelings and develop safer behaviours.

Leaders and managers provide clear, child-focused direction. The team works well together, and staff feel supported in their roles.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience warm and consistent care that helps them feel safe and secure. Staff build trusting relationships with children and use these to support their progress. As a result, children are more engaged in their care and show increased confidence in expressing their needs.

Children are making good progress in their education. Staff maintain strong communication with schools and education providers, which ensures that children receive consistent support and encouragement. When children are waiting for school placements, they are engaged in learning through tutors and other activities. This enables them to keep the routine of learning well.

Children benefit from a nurturing and homely environment. They enjoy meaningful experiences such as holidays, seasonal events and activities. Bedrooms are individualised and reflect children's identities. This strengthens their sense of belonging. Children describe the home as calm, comfortable and somewhere they feel happy.

Key-work sessions are well thought out and linked to the issues children face. Staff use creative approaches, including social stories, to help children understand relationships, online safety and health needs. These sessions are clearly linked to children's goals and show thoughtful work that supports their individual growth.

Children's voices are central to daily life. House meetings are positive and cover a wide range of issues. Children influence routines, activities and decisions that affect them. Staff listen carefully and act on what children say, which reinforces trust and helps children feel valued. One child has been able to purchase a rabbit and has taken responsibility in the care of it.

Staff support children to maintain relationships with family and people who are important to them. Family members speak positively about the care provided and the progress children have made. Staff also maintain appropriate contact with children after they leave the home, reflecting the lasting impact of the relationships built.

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

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and triggers and use effective strategies to keep them safe. Risk assessments are clear, comprehensive and regularly updated. Staff demonstrate professional curiosity and a strong understanding of each child's vulnerabilities. Staff use trauma-informed approaches in their day-to-day practice, which helps children understand their emotions, develop healthy coping strategies and build resilience.

A lapse in supervision allowed 2 children to engage in inappropriate physical contact and maintain a relationship while living in the home. This indicates that staff oversight was not maintained at the level required to keep all children safe. Such incidents highlight the importance of consistent vigilance and clear expectations across the whole team to ensure that children are protected at all times.

Physical interventions are used only when necessary. Staff and children are spoken to after each incident, but individual staff debriefs have not always taken place within the required timescale. After one incident, staff undertook a group reflective session rather than individual reflection. This means that staff do not have the opportunity to explore their own decision-making, consider their emotional response or identify any personal learning that would strengthen future practice.

When allegations or concerns are raised, staff and managers respond promptly and with clear professional judgement. Children are listened to and taken seriously throughout the process. Managers liaise appropriately with safeguarding partners and ensure that actions are taken without delay. Records show that decisions are well reasoned and that children's safety and wellbeing remain central at every stage.

Staff place emphasis on children's online safety. They use regular conversations and key work to help children understand how to stay safe when using phones, gaming platforms and social media. Children are supported to recognise risks, think about privacy and make safer choices online. Staff monitor online activity appropriately and respond quickly when concerns arise. This consistent approach helps children develop an awareness to keep themselves safe in their daily lives.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager knows the children well and has excellent oversight of their progress and needs. She is ambitious for the children and sets a clear tone for the home. Her leadership style is warm and extremely child focused. This contributes directly to the home's stability and positive culture.

Team meetings and supervision sessions are regular, reflective and child focused. Staff have opportunities to discuss children's progress, reflect on their practice and consider how best to support children's emotional needs. Research and therapeutic guidance are used well to inform discussions and strengthen practice.

Staff development is a strength. Training is not generic but tailored to the specific needs of the children, including work around emotional regulation, trauma and behavioural presentations. Staff value this training and feel it improves their confidence and understanding. The manager has also brought in additional support to strengthen the team and ensure that new staff feel confident in their roles.

Staff speak positively about working in the home and describe it as a home from home. They work well together and provide consistent, nurturing care. Feedback from staff is positive and reflects a strong, cohesive team culture.

Gathering of feedback from agencies, staff, children and carers when completing the 'quality of care' report is not robust. Feedback remains limited, and the manager should continue to explore practical ways to gather this routinely to inform development and evaluation. Strengthening this process will help ensure that external perspectives, professional insight and children's lived experiences are fully reflected in the home's ongoing improvement work.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi) and (vii)) In particular, the manager must ensure that staff are able to monitor children effectively so that they come to no harm.	23 July 2026
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.	23 July 2026

In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—

the quality of care provided for children;

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are kept and should enable them to review the use of control, discipline and restraint and to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. This specifically relates to staff being given the opportunity to undertake an individual debrief. (Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards, page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: SC026991

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: Thomas Cappleman

Registered manager: Wendy Birtwistle

Inspector

Colin Jones, Social Care Inspector

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