

SC363384

Registered provider: Keys Educational Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to five children who may require support with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

There were five children living at the home at the time of the inspection. During the inspection, four children were spoken with.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 June 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 19 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/06/2024	Full	Good
04/09/2023	Full	Good
13/09/2022	Full	Good
25/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Some areas of the home, including bathrooms and communal spaces, are not consistently clean and well maintained. This detracts from the overall quality and homeliness of the setting. However, efforts have been made to enhance the environment through redecoration, and children's bedrooms are thoughtfully personalised, reflecting their individual preferences and promoting a sense of belonging.

Children benefit from strong, trusting relationships with staff. They feel safe and at ease in their environment and are confident to speak openly with staff. External professionals report no concerns regarding the care provided and have observed the warm, nurturing and playful interactions that contribute to the positive and supportive atmosphere in the home.

Children make meaningful progress in key areas of their development. Notably, children are progressing with their education and are benefiting from tailored support to meet their emotional needs. They are also increasingly engaging with therapeutic services, which is contributing positively to their overall well-being.

Staff currently lack the necessary skills and expertise to support one child effectively, which has contributed to the escalation of safeguarding incidents. While this has been recognised by the provider, there is not yet clear and robust planning in place to ensure that the child is appropriately placed and receives the support they need. Additionally, care planning for another child approaching adulthood lacks clarity and depth. More comprehensive and individualised planning is needed to support this child's successful progression towards independence.

Children feel listened to and know how to raise concerns. When complaints have been made, they have been taken seriously and addressed promptly, with appropriate procedures followed. This culture of listening is strengthened by strong advocacy from leaders and managers, who are committed to ensuring that children's needs are met. As a result, one child who moved on from the home experienced a well-planned and positive exit, supported by staff who understood and prioritised their individual journey.

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

Incidents of children going missing from the home are managed effectively. Staff respond appropriately in line with each child's individual risk assessment and established protocols. The frequency of these incidents has reduced, particularly for one child, because of the consistent and supportive approach from staff. This has helped the child to feel safer and more secure, leading to fewer episodes of going missing from home. However, return home interviews are not consistently completed. This means that opportunities to explore the reasons why children go missing and to identify potential risks or concerns are sometimes missed.

There are concerns regarding the use of physical intervention and behaviour management. Not all physical intervention used by staff is in line with approved techniques or the child's individual behaviour management plan. In some instances, de-escalation strategies have not been implemented effectively prior to intervention. Additionally, managerial oversight has not been timely, with reviews taking place up to a month later. This delay has resulted in incidents not being promptly evaluated, and important concerns have not been identified or addressed in incident reports swiftly.

Staff demonstrate an awareness of the importance of consulting children's records and risk assessments to gather information when children go missing. However, there is a lack of clarity regarding the specific actions they should take in response to individual incidents. This shortfall is further exacerbated by the fact that not all children's support plans are reviewed and updated regularly, which may impede timely and effective responses to incidents.

Children who hurt themselves receive consistent care and nurturing support that align with their individual care plans. This approach ensures that they access timely medical and therapeutic interventions when required. Additionally, robust multi-agency planning with professionals involved in the child's care helps to provide a coordinated and effective response to their needs associated with self-injurious behaviours.

Consequences for children are not consistently proportionate or appropriate to their behaviours. Furthermore, they do not always support opportunities for reflection or help educate the child, limiting the potential for positive behavioural development.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager demonstrates a thorough understanding of the children's individual needs and is passionate about the quality of care and support provided. Advocacy for each child is a clear priority, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are met effectively.

There have been significant delays in management oversight and monitoring of physical interventions and incidents. As a result, opportunities for timely learning, reflection and improvement for leaders, managers and the wider staff team are compromised.

Supervision sessions and team meetings have not been consistently conducted, especially for staff who are new to the home. This inconsistency has affected the emotional well-being of staff and limited opportunities for reflection and learning following a challenging period marked by a high number of incidents.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear awareness of areas requiring improvement and have established plans to address the necessary changes. There is a continuing focus on the development of senior staff to enhance the support provided to managers and the wider team.

There has been insufficient consideration of training and learning needs specific to the children's individual requirements. As a result, some staff lack the necessary skills and knowledge to fully meet the needs of some children. Furthermore, several staff members have not completed their required qualification within the designated timescale.

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; 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v)(b)) This specifically relates to the requirement for staffing arrangements to be sufficient and organised effectively to meet the individual and collective needs of all children living in the home. Risk assessments and support plans must be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure staff have access to accurate, current information that enables them to provide appropriate support and safeguard each child effectively. The management of peer relationships should be underpinned by adequate staffing levels, relevant experience and ongoing training to mitigate risks and promote a safe and supportive environment.	21 August 2025
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	21 August 2025

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(h)) This specifically relates to the responsibility of leaders and managers to exercise effective oversight and monitoring of the service, particularly in relation to incidents involving children, to support staff reflection, learning and continuous improvement. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff receive regular supervision, attend team meetings and are provided with appropriate support in accordance with the home's statement of purpose. Furthermore, staff should complete relevant training and hold appropriate qualifications to ensure they are equipped to meet the diverse needs of the children in their care.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and	21 August 2025

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the child requests a review of the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(iii)(e)(iii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the home only admits children whose needs it can reasonably and effectively meet in line with its statement of purpose. Where it becomes evident that a child's needs cannot be met, appropriate action must be taken to review their care arrangements in partnership with the placing authority, ensuring that the placement remains safe and suitable. This also includes regular reviews of children's care plans in collaboration with the local authority, particularly where young people are preparing for independence, to ensure their evolving needs are identified and appropriately supported.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	21 August 2025

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

This specifically relates to ensuring that any use of physical intervention is clearly recorded, reviewed and monitored in line with regulatory requirements, to promote accountability and ensure the safety and well-being of both children and staff. All incidents must be evaluated to identify patterns, inform practice and support continuous improvement in behaviour management and safeguarding.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing, clean and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children; it will, in most cases, be a homely, domestic environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from home or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The home should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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: SC363384

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: Luke Taylor

Registered manager: Zoe Dawkins

Inspector

Eleanor Quanbrough, Social Care Inspector

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