

SC420388

Registered provider: Keys ACE 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. The home provides care for up to four children who may experience emotional and social difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home. Three children spoke with the inspectors.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2024.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 November 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 25 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2025	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2024	Full	Good
06/03/2023	Full	Good
13/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are supported to build positive relationships with staff. Staff treat children with dignity and respect. Staff spoken to during the inspection spoke fondly and with pride about the children they care for.

All children regularly attend school. For one child, there have been some difficulties, and as a result, there have been several school exclusions. Staff and the manager work closely with the school and social worker to identify strategies to support the child to positively engage in education.

Staff support children to attend routine health appointments with the doctor and dentist. When necessary, staff seek additional specialist health and well-being support, such as child and adolescent mental health services and the in-house therapist.

Children are encouraged and supported to take part in activities that promote their hobbies and interests, such as shopping, walking, football, baking and movie nights. These activities enable children to try new things and be involved in the local community.

Children's time spent with family is supported by staff in line with agreed plans. Staff take children to see their family, which supports children to maintain relationships with those who are important to them.

Staff complete regular direct work sessions with children. These meaningful sessions are child focused and enable children to prepare for events, understand safety and risks and support them to manage and identify their emotions. They are individualised and targeted to each child's understanding and level of ability.

Children have plenty of opportunities to express their views and wishes and contribute to decisions about their day-to-day care. Children said that if they have any worries or concerns, they can talk to staff, and they will listen and help.

When children are new to the home, they are welcomed sensitively with the best possible planning based on their individual needs and circumstances. The manager assesses the compatibility with other children living in the home to make an informed and child-centred decision about whether children are suitable to live together.

When children have left the home, this has been part of their longer-term plan. The manager and staff have worked well with the child's placing authority and their new home to support the child's move to be as easy as possible and minimise any difficulties for them.

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

When children raise complaints or concerns about staff, these are acted on swiftly and the relevant professionals are notified. Children's welfare is a priority throughout. There are processes in place to provide staff with guidance to follow should a concern arise, and staff understand this and put it into practice. However, staff spoken to were not clear on the role of the local authority designated officer.

Children's support plans are detailed documents that include relevant and current information to enable staff to understand children's needs. They include detailed and individualised strategies and guidance for staff to help them provide consistent care and support to children.

When it has been necessary to hold a child to keep them safe, interventions have been reasonable and proportionate, and staff are trained to carry them out safely. Children and staff are supported to reflect on the incident afterwards. The manager has a detailed oversight of each report to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the measure used and to identify any triggers, updates needed to support plans and to support staff development.

When children have been missing from the home, staff have taken suitable action to search for them and have followed the processes detailed in children's plans. Staff ensure that all the necessary professionals are informed, and staff work with the police to enable a quick return to the home for children.

When it is necessary to impose consequences, these are reasonable and proportionate. The manager evaluates their effectiveness, and children's views are considered. Alongside this, positive behaviour is promoted through positive reinforcement, celebration and praise.

Staff support children suitably when they display behaviours that may cause injury to themselves. Staff ensure that children receive first aid and external medical input if needed. The manager has reviewed these incidents, and staff speak to children following these incidents to recognise any triggers and to identify any ongoing support needed.

There have been no incidents of bullying. However children sometimes provoke or frustrate one another at times. Staff take appropriate action to address this and to teach children to understand and identify bullying to ensure that these occasions do not escalate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is an experienced registered manager in post. She has a clear vision of what she wants to achieve for the children and for the development of the team.

Leaders and managers make use of internal and external monitoring of the home. The manager has effective systems in place to ensure that she maintains oversight of significant events. These systems provide scrutiny and ensure that the manager can identify areas of positive practice and drive improvements.

There is a stable and consistent team of staff who are child focused. This means that children are cared for by staff who know them well. Staff enjoy working at the home and said that they feel valued and supported.

There is a positive ethos in the home, and staff spoken to said that the manager is always available for support and guidance. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and have a shared sense of ownership and accountability; they work well as a team, and the manager leads by example.

Supervision sessions take place regularly. They are child focused, practice related and an opportunity to reflect on significant events. They are also used as a supportive tool for staff. In addition to this, team meetings are held regularly and are well attended by the team. Their focus is to share updates and information about children and as a development opportunity for staff. These meetings are also attended by the in-house therapist if needed.

Staff are trained in a range of subjects to meet children's specific needs. However, one child has suffered a significant bereavement immediately before moving into the home, and while staff have shown empathy and have access to some resources provided by the in-house therapist, they have not been trained to provide support in response to children's bereavement. This limits their ability to understand the child's needs and how best to help them.

The home environment is warm and welcoming, and there are photos of the children throughout. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their interests. This helps them gain a sense of belonging. However, there are areas of the home that require some attention, such as damage to the walls and redecoration work due to wear and tear. This has been identified by the manager and highlighted on maintenance plans; however, this has not been completed in a timely manner. In addition to this, there is a strong smell of urine in one child's bedroom, and current cleaning routines are not always addressing this effectively.

The manager and staff are committed to working together with parents, placing authorities, specialist health advisers and schools. These positive and effective working relationships make sure that children consistently receive a high level of care and ensure that there is a wraparound approach to supporting children's progress in line with their individual targets and goals.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff are trained in a timely manner in subjects required to support children's specific needs.	1 January 2026
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;	1 January 2026

ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—

meet the needs of each child.
(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(vii)(c)(i))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there are effective cleaning routines in place for children's bedrooms. In addition to this, wear and tear and any damage must be repaired and redecorated swiftly.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that supervision of staff practice ensures that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home, so they understand the role of the local authority designated officer and know how and when to contact them if needed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)

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: SC420388

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys ACE Limited

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

Responsible individual: Natalie Griffin

Registered manager: Charly Stone

Inspectors

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector
Vicky Byron, Social Care Inspector

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