

SC480318

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care for up to four children who may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home consists of two buildings. There is a main home building that provides accommodation for three children and a separate annex that provides accommodation for one child.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home in the annex. Two children were living in the main home.

The registered manager post is currently vacant. The previous manager resigned in October 2024. The covering manager had applied to register with Ofsted but has since withdrawn their application.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 July 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: 15 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2025	Full	Good
09/10/2024	Full	Inadequate
27/02/2024	Full	Good
21/03/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children living at the home were seen during the inspection and two children were spoken to.

Children benefit from a stable and nurturing environment where they are supported by staff who build positive relationships with them. These relationships help children feel safe, valued and understood. One child said that they had 'no worries' and described the home as 'chill', adding that 'the adults are all lovely'. Relationships between children and adults are warm and trusting, with children seeking out staff for affection and reassurance when needed.

Children are making positive progress in education. Staff are proactive in promoting learning and ensuring that children's educational needs are met. When a part-time timetable was introduced for one child, the manager worked effectively with education professionals to advocate on the child's behalf. They ensured that the child's views were heard and considered, resulting in the child now attending school almost full time.

Children's health needs are well met. They have access to appropriate medical services and specialist emotional health support. Staff consult regularly with psychological professionals and this input is used to inform and adapt children's care plans. This ensures that support is responsive and tailored to each child's emotional and developmental needs.

The manager plays an important role in supporting children's relationships with their family and friends. Family time is led by the children, with their wishes and feelings listened to and acted upon. This child-centred approach has enabled children to spend time with their families' doing activities. One parent said that they could see a positive difference in their child when they come home and described the manager and staff as 'lovely', highlighting the 'good communication' they receive from the team.

Children have a range of interests and hobbies that they enjoy, including gaming, football, fishing and baking. These activities help children to gain confidence and form positive relationships. However, community engagement remains a challenge for some children. Staff are encouraged to continue supporting and motivating children to become more involved in their local communities, helping them to develop wider social networks and a stronger sense of belonging.

The home environment has been improved, which contributes to a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere for children. Children's bedrooms are personalised and well maintained, reflecting their individual preferences and helping them to feel at home. However, some areas retain a clinical feel, which detracts slightly from the otherwise homely environment. There is a disconnect between the main house and the annex, and children living in each area do not mix. This limits opportunities for children to build

wider peer relationships and develop a sense of community within the home. Staff are aware of this and are exploring ways to promote more integration and shared experiences where appropriate.

During school holidays, some children experienced less structure in their daily routines, particularly around sleep. This has impacted on their emotional and physical well-being, and staff are aware of this and are working to establish more consistent routines to support children's overall development.

For older children, independence planning is in place. However, the consistency and intensity of this work varies. In some cases, planning lacks sufficient focus, which means children are not always fully prepared for the transition to semi-independent living. This limits opportunities for them to develop the practical and emotional skills needed for adulthood.

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

Children report feeling safe living in the home and are confident in speaking to staff if they have any worries or concerns. Staff engage children in regular, meaningful conversations to explore their experiences and feelings. These discussions are recorded and used to inform individual care planning, ensuring that safeguarding practice remains child centred and responsive.

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and take effective action to protect children. Concerns such as substance misuse and online safety are addressed through ongoing education and support. This proactive approach has contributed to a reduction in incidents and promotes children's safety and well-being.

Physical restraint has not been used for over a year. Staff prioritise de-escalation and calming strategies, drawing on the strong, trusting relationships they have built with children to manage emotional distress effectively. While physical intervention has not been necessary, staff are familiar with the procedures they would follow if required. Leaders and managers are strengthening staff knowledge and confidence through targeted training and reflective supervision.

When incidents do occur, they are clearly recorded and show a consistent pattern. Staff recognised this pattern and responded appropriately. Restorative approaches and debriefs demonstrate reflective care and a child-centred approach to safeguarding. These practices help children to understand and manage their emotions and contribute to a safe and supportive environment.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to respond to safety concerns. Written guidance provide staff with clear information on how to identify and mitigate risks. This support staff practice in helping children to keep themselves safe.

Children's individual plans outline the support they require. However, the home has not received the most recent local authority care plans. This creates a risk that staff may not be working to current objectives and expectations. Although there has been no significant impact on children, the manager has not consistently escalated this to the local authority team manager to request the necessary documentation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager post is currently vacant following the resignation of the previous manager in October 2024. A covering manager remained in post at the time of the inspection and had previously submitted an application to register with Ofsted, which has since been withdrawn. Interim leadership arrangements were being established to ensure continuity of care and oversight.

Despite the absence of a permanent registered manager, staff report feeling well supported and there has been no disruption to the day-to-day running of the home. During this time of no registered manager the responsible individual has maintained good oversight of the care provided to children.

The manager and staff know the children well and promote their individual interests and identities. They have high expectations for each child, which helps to build children's confidence and self-esteem. Leaders can clearly describe the progress children have made since moving into the home and demonstrate a strong understanding of their needs.

Leaders and managers are viewed as approachable and supportive. There are strong, respectful relationships between the manager, the responsible individual and the wider staff team. Staff report that they feel valued and are encouraged to reflect on and improve their practice.

External professionals speak highly of the manager and staff team. They describe the team as caring, committed and focused on achieving the best outcomes for children. One social worker said there is 'good communication' and that the team supports family time effectively.

The manager uses both internal and external monitoring processes to evaluate the quality of care provided. Regular oversight ensures that practice remains focused on the needs and experiences of children. Through these systems, the manager has a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development.

The staff team has remained resilient in the face of previous challenges. Leaders and managers have worked effectively to stabilise the home and improve outcomes for children. Staff retention is strong and morale has improved significantly. Staff benefit from regular, reflective supervision and report feeling well supported in their professional development through access to training and opportunities for reflective practice.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(c)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that all children have access to up-to-date statutory documentation, including care plans, pathway plans and allocated personal advisers. In addition, the registered manager must escalate delays to the placing authority and strengthen systems to ensure timely receipt and use of essential documentation.	29 August 2025

Recommendations

- The registered manager should ensure that staff establish and maintain consistent sleep routines for children to support their emotional and physical well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- The registered manager should ensure that staff increase the consistency and intensity of independence planning for older children, particularly those approaching transition to semi-independent living. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

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: SC480318

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Eleanor Brammer

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Karen Hallam, Social Care Inspector

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