

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	10 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC005204
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered Person	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered Person address	Keys Attachment Centre, Hurstwood Court, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6HR

Responsible Individual	Julie Hamilton
Registered Manager	Tracey Hopes
Inspector	Michelle Bacon

Inspection date	10 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC005204

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff are proactive in addressing the challenges that children and young people present. They work in partnership with a range of professionals to promote their welfare.
- Most children and young people have excellent attendance at school and are making good progress in their education.
- Children and young people engage in a range of social, educational and recreational activities inside and outside the home.
- Children and young people are supported to build trusted and secure relationships with the adults working at the home.
- Since the last inspection, the home is far more settled and a stable staff team is in place.
- Children's and young people's views are taken into account in the day-to-day running of the home and the care they receive.
- Since her return to work in January, the manager has worked hard at bringing together the staff team and developing their confidence. However, this has meant that a number of the recommendations made at the last inspection have not been fully addressed. For example, handwritten records are still hard to read at times.
- Records of key work sessions do not demonstrate that staff are consistently using a child-centred and nurturing approach.
- Some staff training is not up to date.
- Regular health and safety checks ensure that there is a safe environment for children and young people to live. However, window catches in some of the bedrooms have broken off or are in need of repair, and some rooms have mould and mildew on the windows as a result of poor ventilation.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets the Care Standards Act 2000, 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered provider must ensure that individuals employed to work at the children's home have the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills for the work. (Regulation 32(3)(b))	30 June 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The home should consider whether and how it can support children and young people to access the internet safely. In particular, that work is undertaken with children and young people to ensure that they know how to keep themselves safe. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours, in key areas of health and well-being, such as, but not limited to, sexual relationships, sexual health, and the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Specifically, that young people's healthcare plans detail how these issues will be addressed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and should understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information should always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control and discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the principles as set out in quality standard 9.35 are respected. ('Guide

to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

- Ensure that any damaged or missing window catches are replaced in young people's bedrooms in order that the rooms can be adequately ventilated. In addition, ensure that any mould or mildew is cleaned off all the windows. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is run and managed by a large independent provider. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
3 December 2015	Full	Requires improvement
29 September 2015	Full	Inadequate
3 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30 October 2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Since the last inspection, children and young people have received good quality care that has enabled them to continue to thrive and grow. At the time of the last inspection, the organisation had stopped taking any new admissions in order to provide stability and consistency for the children and young people already living in the home. As a result, they are now benefiting from a more stable, safe and secure environment. Three of the children and young people have lived together for a year or more now, and they have developed positive relationships with key members of staff. One young person who recently moved into the home has settled in quickly and is engaging well, particularly in his education after not attending school for a significant period of time. All children and young people attend school, and engagement for most is very good. Staff advocate for children and young people to attend mainstream school where appropriate. One young person is currently struggling with some emotional issues which has impacted on his education placement. Staff have liaised effectively with teachers and other educational professionals to try to overcome the barriers to his full participation in education. Staff are proactive in promoting children's and young people's education, including transporting them to and from school. Children and young people also have access to a computer and a range of books. Staff help young people with their homework after school, which supports their learning and development. One young person's academic levels have increased notably in recent months. His social worker said, 'He has come on leaps and bounds... a consistent approach and the school package has helped with this.' Staff demonstrate an understanding of children's and young people's individual needs and backgrounds. They actively promote their physical and emotional health, and work closely with the organisation's therapists to support children and young people. However, individual placement plans are still unclear about the support, advice and guidance provided to young people, particularly in relation to smoking and their sexual identity. A recommendation was made at the last inspection in relation to this, so this is repeated. Staff encourage children and young people to take part in a range of positive and rewarding activities. This helps to improve their self-esteem and confidence, as well as developing individual interests, such as martial arts, boxing and swimming. One young person has made friends in the local community and prefers to spend	

his free time with them rather than taking part in group activities.

Records of key work sessions demonstrate that staff regularly engage in conversations with the children and young people. However, the records do not always reflect that they are being supported to explore their thoughts, feelings and worries in a sympathetic and nurturing way.

Children and young people have the opportunity to develop practical skills appropriate to their age. For example, the younger children take responsibility for their personal care and keeping their bedrooms tidy. As they get older, young people undertake a programme of independence that includes cooking, making their beds, washing clothes and ironing. This stands them in good stead for their eventual move on to more independent living.

Staff provide children and young people with good support to maintain contact with their families and those important to them. Consequently, they benefit from sustaining close attachments and retain a sense of identity.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children and young people feel safe and are protected from harm. At the time of the last inspection the organisation put a hold on any new admissions in order to provide stability and consistency for the children and young people already living in the home. The home is far more settled, with a permanent staff team which is working more cohesively. A placing social worker said, '(Name) has gone from being at great risk of harming himself and others to not doing this any more. When he does have the odd setback, this is linked to his therapy. He is really doing well and has said he is not leaving until he's 18.' Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place when children and young people go missing from the home. On the rare occasions that this happens, staff try to discourage them from leaving and follow them. In the event that a child or young person goes missing, there are clear protocols between the police and the home to ensure their prompt return. Return interviews are undertaken by an independent person. This gives children and young people the opportunity to talk to someone independent of the home about the reasons for going missing. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of their duty to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people. Allegations are referred to the local authority designated officer for their consideration. It is clear from the records that concerns are investigated thoroughly and appropriate action is taken to ensure the	

welfare and safety of children and young people. Risk assessments identify each child's and young person's specific risks and how these will be met. These are reviewed and updated to ensure that they continue to promote the well-being of the children and young people.

Children and young people benefit from clear and consistent behaviour management strategies. They are encouraged to behave in a manner that is acceptable and safe for them and others. Incidents of challenging behaviour are becoming less frequent because staff are managing children's and young people's anger and frustrations better. Furthermore, physical interventions have significantly reduced for individual children and young people. The use of sanctions is minimal, but the records do not always reflect that a nurturing approach is being used. For example, on one occasion a member of staff recorded that a young person had to stay close to adults in the home. It is unclear how this sanction resulted in the young person learning from his actions. Requesting police support is now a rare occurrence.

Staff closely monitor the use of the internet and social media sites used by children and young people. This proactive response resulted in staff identifying a fake account that had been set up on a social networking site using one of the young people's names. This was reported and the site was immediately closed down. However, there is little evidence of work being undertaken with children and young people to ensure that they know how to keep themselves safe online. E-safety training is being planned for all staff in May 2016. This will increase their understanding of keeping children and young people safe online.

Regular health and safety checks ensure that there is a safe environment for children and young people to live in. However, window catches in some of the bedrooms have broken off or are in need of repair, and some rooms have mould and mildew on the windows as a result of poor ventilation.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered manager has been in post since 2006 and is suitably qualified and experienced. At the time of the inspection in early December 2015, she had a prolonged absence from work that had limited the home's capacity to improve. She returned to work in January 2016 and is eager to embed the positive changes made, such as developing the new key workers and delivering the therapeutic training programme based on a safe and sound model of care to all the staff team. The responsible individual, manager and staff acknowledge that 'we clearly were a	

mess' last year, but there is a real commitment to driving up standards in practice. Staff spoken to during the inspection expressed a strong sense of shared responsibility and noted improvements in staff morale. They confirm that supervision and team meetings support them to reflect on practice and talk through any issues. Consequently, they feel valued and respected.

Children and young people benefit from a more stable and competent staff team. The majority of staff hold a suitable childcare qualification. They also have access to training and development opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge of the needs of the children and young people. However, there are gaps in some staff training, including medication, first aid and bullying.

The home is achieving its aims and objectives as set out in the statement of purpose. The manager and staff work proactively and effectively with a range of professionals, such as health, education and placing social workers, to improve outcomes for children and young people.

At the last inspection, two requirements and three recommendations were made. Both requirements have been addressed. However several of the recommendations have not yet been met, and have therefore been repeated. For example, records are handwritten and the handwriting makes them difficult to read. This reduces the usefulness of the records to both staff and children.

Independent monitoring of the home is undertaken every month and supports the manager to improve the service to children and young people. The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She has worked hard to improve consistency of staff practice, but recognises that there is still some way to go in developing the staff team. That said, it is evident that the needs of children and young people are at the centre of staff practice.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, but the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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