

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC009651
Inspector	Mandy Williams
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered person address	Laganwood House 44 New Forge Lane Belfast BT9 5NW
Responsible individual	Heather Ann Laffin
Registered manager	Rebecca Jade Sharples
Date of last inspection	17/01/2014

Inspection date	11/12/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good home where children make good progress across all areas of their development. Staff provide highly personalised care that effectively meets their needs. Staff work hard to ensure that living in the home makes a positive difference to children's lives. Children say that they are happy at the home and that they feel safe here.

Children benefit from good routines with clear boundaries. The staff team work well together and is largely stable. They know each other and the children well. Children receive high quality nurturing care, where they can begin to form attachments. They enjoy positive, warm and respectful relationships with staff. Staff help children develop an understanding of their past and learn coping strategies for the future.

Children's views play an important part in the decision making in the home and their views are actively sought. Staff successfully motivate those resident to engage in purposeful activities both within and outside of the home. A range of recreational activities are well supported by staff.

The home is efficiently managed. The Registered Manager provides good leadership and she is enthusiastic about the development of the home. Partnership working is effective. There is good communication between staff in the home; other involved

professionals and young people's families, which ensures that everyone is working together with a focus on improving outcomes for children.

Three requirements and one additional good practice recommendation have arisen as a result of this inspection. These relate to minor changes required to routine management procedures and the completion of additional checks at part of the staff recruitment process. However, the standard of care is high and these omissions have not had a negative impact on the welfare of children.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people. The children and young people may have emotional and behavioural difficulties, including attachment problems.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
16/04/2013	Full	good
07/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
24/04/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
5 (2001)	ensure that the HMCI is notified of any revision to the statement of purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5(b))	16/01/2015
12B (2001)	ensure that the local authority for the area in which the children's home is located, is notified without delay of the admission of a child into the home; specifically that notifications are dated and indicate when the child was admitted to the home (Regulation 12B(1))	16/01/2015
26 (2001)	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to all people employed in the	16/01/2015

	children's home, and that this includes all the matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 26(3)(d))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that all personnel responsible for recruitment and selection of staff are trained in, understand and operate good recruitment practice; specifically the principles of safer recruitment. (NMS 16.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children currently living in the home are making good progress across all areas of their development. They have frequently been in receipt of unpredictable care prior to their admission to the home. They are often unfamiliar with routines and have a range of attachment difficulties. However, the staff team in the home is stable and children benefit from a good routine and a consistency of care. They receive predictable responses from staff who demonstrate that they really care for them. As a result, they are learning to trust adults and manage their own emotions and behaviours. One social worker commented, 'Since being placed at the home, X has made significant progress in all areas of his development. The young person is supported fully in respect of his educational, social, developmental and emotional needs.' Since the last inspection one young person has left the home in an unplanned manner following their involvement in risk taking behaviours in the local community.

Staff pro-actively address children's health needs. They are registered with a range of health care practitioners and they ensure that their medical needs receive attention. Staff encourage children to be physically active. Some attend regular groups such as trampolining or swimming, while others are regular visitors to the local park. Such activities help keep children physically fit; improve their self-esteem; and enable them to make friendships in the local community.

All children attend school and are making good progress with their education. While some attend the organisation's own school, others attend mainstream schools. Moving to the home has often necessitated a change of school. However, children have made the transition well as they have been supported by staff to do so.

Children's emotional health needs are well met while they live in the home. They have access to trained therapists within the organisation. Children attend for therapy on an individual basis and staff also receive regular opportunities to consult with therapists. This allows them the opportunity to receive an update on the progress that young people are making and also enables them to seek advice on how best to respond to any current behaviour that is of concern to them. Staff receive training in attachment issues and all staff within the organisation use a shared terminology that is understood by the children. This consistent approach helps the children feel safe and confident in the response that they will receive.

Children receive encouragement and support to keep in contact with family members who are important to them. Social workers report that staff are reliable and flexible in relation to contact arrangements, which they appreciate. Staff are also alert to the potential difficulties that a cancelled contact arrangement may have for a child and manage this well, in order to alleviate their disappointment. Some children are also

developing friendships in the community. Staff support this and children are allowed to have their friends in the home to play. These actions ensure that young people are able to maintain contact with those important to them.

Quality of care

outstanding

Children enjoy positive and respectful relationships with staff and with each other. Staff provide consistency of care and act as positive role models for children. The environment is homely and nurturing. One child said, 'I like living here, it is really nice and I like the staff.' Similarly, social workers were very positive about the home and the warm and welcoming atmosphere. One social worker commented, 'It is clear through observations during my visits that my child has positive relationships with staff. I am always made to feel welcome.'

Individualised placement plans are in place for all the children in the home. These are subject to regular review and are agreed by those with parental responsibility. Staff demonstrate a really good understanding of the individual needs of children. One social worker confirmed this saying, 'Staff are always well informed and up-to-date with any issues concerning the young people.' The staff team is stable and experienced. They know the children well. This enables children to develop positive relationships with them. Keyworker relationships are well established and used effectively to address any pertinent issues.

Social workers say that communication between the home and themselves is excellent. Staff provide helpful monthly update reports for social workers and inform them immediately if there are any incidents of concern. Social workers say this helps them keep up-to-date. Staff are also in regular communication with children's schools and are aware of their educational targets. Hence, they can help children work on these within the home environment. They are also keen to implement new initiatives if this may help a child to achieve. For example, they have recently purchased a new keyboard and mouse designed especially for small children as one child was struggling to use the computer. Staff acknowledge and celebrate children's educational achievements, reinforcing the importance of this to them.

Children are aware that they are able to make a complaint. The process is clearly outlined in the children's guide to the home that they receive on admission. An independent advocate also visits the home on a regular basis so that the children are familiar with her and her role. A small number of complaints have been made since the last inspection. These have subject to investigation and children have been informed of the outcome. Demonstrating that staff in the home take children's complaints seriously.

A good medication management system ensures the safe administration of medication. Clear records are maintained by the home and medication is securely

stored. Appropriate medical consents are also in place.

Good staffing levels in the home allow staff the opportunity to consult with those living in the home informally on a daily basis. Regular children's meetings also allow them the opportunity to express their views about the running of the home. They regularly contribute to menu planning, changes to the décor of the home and to planning their activities. Children's views are important and contribute to the home's development plan. For example, staff purchased goalposts and a trampoline for the garden over the summer, following discussion with the children.

The home is located in a quiet residential area. It is indistinguishable from other properties in the locality. Children live in a comfortable and homely environment, which has received new carpets and re-decoration since the last inspection. A recommendation that was made at the last inspection relating to this has been addressed. Children's bedrooms are personalised and some have chosen a theme for their room. In some instances staff have designed and painted murals on the wall and purchased matching bedding and curtains. Children have been thrilled with the results. This helps children to feel that they belong in the home.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Children say that they feel safe living in the home. Staff receive safeguarding training as part of their induction to the home. This ensures that they are confident in the procedure to follow should any concerns arise. The organisation has a number of policies and procedures designed to safeguard young people and these receive regular review. One social worker commented, 'It is clear that my child has a positive relationship with all members of staff and that he feels safe within his placement.'

Children confirm that bullying is not an issue in the home and a children's guide to bullying leaflet is available for them. Staff complete individual work with children if they are concerned about how they have spoken to someone or made them feel. This approach has been effective in addressing any low level concerns and preventing their escalation.

Recruitment and selection processes are largely sound. A range of checks are completed and records maintained. Individuals are vetted prior to starting work in the home. However, on one occasion the organisation had not explored an individual's voluntary work experience despite this being clear on their application form. No attempt was made to seek a reference in relation to this social care experience, or to confirm the reason for this ceasing. Recruiting managers do not routinely complete safer recruitment training. This would assist them to be alert to such issues in order to satisfy themselves about an individual's suitability to work in the home.

Staff promote the positive behaviour of children in the home by the use of incentives,

for which they receive a reward. This motivates young people to reach their goal. Their individualised targets are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain suitable. Poor behaviour is also sanctioned occasionally. For example, refusing to turn off the games console resulting in no use of the games console on the following day. Children say that the sanctions are fair and generally they apologise for their behaviour. However, the ethos of the home is to reward good behaviour, with rewards far exceeding any sanctions imposed. Children are clear about the behaviour that is expected of them and the rules and boundaries of the home.

Staff prioritise the welfare of the children in their care. They benefit from individualised behaviour management plans, which outline to staff the most appropriate way to respond to their behaviours. In addition, all staff are trained in the safe implementation of restraint. The number of incidents has been high for some children living in the home, although records indicate that these are reducing. Clear records are maintained of any incidents that do occur and records receive evaluation by the Registered Manager. Children confirm that they understand the rules of restraint and that safe procedures are followed.

Young people live in a physically safe environment, as regular safety checks are undertaken on equipment in the home. A range of environmental risk assessments are also in place. Fire drills take place regularly, including in night-time conditions which ensures that all those in the home are familiar with the actions to take in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

good

There is an appropriately experienced and registered manager in charge of the home. She has had management responsibility for this home for the last 12 months and was formally registered by Ofsted in April 2014. A deputy manager is in place to support her. The Registered Manager is well respected by staff and professionals who have involvement with the home. There is a suitably comprehensive Statement of Purpose in place that clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the home. However, this has been updated since the last inspection but a copy has not been forwarded to Ofsted as required.

The Registered Manager has taken action to address the two requirements and one recommendation made at the last interim inspection of the home in January 2014. Complaint records now contain all the necessary details and further training has been completed with staff. It is also evident that the Registered Manager has taken action to source any missing documentation from the child's placing authority. Furthermore, maintenance tasks have been completed in the home as highlighted above.

There is a comprehensive and dynamic development plan in place, which is subject to regular update. This illustrates that the Registered Manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a commitment to continuous

improvement. Staff members are allocated specific areas of responsibility. This ensures that tasks are completed in a timely fashion and makes good use of the skills of the staff team. Regular staff meetings provide a venue for staff to feedback on their progress. These meetings are also utilised by the Registered Manager to provide training updates for staff as well as progress reports on young people. An effective system is in place to ensure that all staff are familiar with the discussion at these meetings.

The internal and external monitoring of the home takes place regularly and reports are forwarded to Ofsted as required. These include regular consultation with children, their parents and social workers. The Registered Manager demonstrates that she is keen to seek the views of stakeholders and work in partnership with them. Records are maintained that help illustrate the progress that children have made since their admission to the home. These give a clear visual indication of the progress made. Procedures have been put in place to ensure that the local authority where the home is located is notified about a new admission. However, these notifications have failed to indicate when the child was admitted to the home and have not been dated. Thus, it is difficult to assess if these were made in a timely way and difficult for the area authority to monitor the young people living in the home.

The home is adequately resourced and staffing rosters demonstrate who is in charge of each shift. Lines of accountability are clear. Staff feel supported by the Registered Manager and receive regular supervision and appraisal. One staff member said, 'I feel very well supported by my manager and by senior staff.' The development of staff is supported. A range of training opportunities are available. Staff confirm that their future training needs would be identified if they were struggling to meet the needs of a particular child. These practices ensure that children are cared for by staff that have the necessary skills and support to meet their needs.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.