

# SC020594

Registered provider: Keys Education Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for eight young people. It offers to 12-week programme to young people who are in crisis. The programme includes young people engaging in activities, staying in temporary accommodation and camping. Ofsted does not inspect all accommodations used. However, the private company are required to carry out their own risk assessments for each accommodation used.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 6 July 2017

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | requires improvement to be good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 12 December 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Declined in effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people make progress from their starting points.
- Young people feel safe and are safe. Incidents are rare.
- De-escalation is a strength of the staff team. Physical interventions and missing incidents are well managed.
- Staff know the young people and encourage them to engage in activities.
- Staff advocate for young people. Young people feel cared for and listened to.
- Key-working sessions are planned and purposeful. They benefit young people and support their progress.
- Bunkhouses are of good quality. Risk assessments are completed prior to young people staying in them.
- Management oversight is good. The registered manager addresses any identified shortfalls in staff practice quickly.
- Managers rigorously review any incidents.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager does not effectively escalate concerns regarding placing authorities.
- Although improvements have been made to the main house, it lacks personalisation.
- Staff do not always document when they have updated young people's risk assessments.
- The registered manager does not ensure that he rigorously checks references for agency staff.
- Staff have not ensured that they have followed risk assessments regarding the locking of vehicles. Young people have had the opportunity to gain entry to vehicles without authorisation.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 12/12/2016      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 28/09/2016      | Full            | Requires improvement      |
| 26/07/2016      | Full            | Inadequate                |
| 14/03/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness   |

## 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, 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   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must ensure that if they consider, 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(c))                                                                                                   | 21/08/2017 |
| The quality and purpose of care standard is that staff provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(vii))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 21/08/2017 |
| The protection of children standard is 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(2)(b))<br><br>In particular, the standard refers to pre-admission risk assessments being completed; ensuring that agency staff references are verified independently of the agency; ensuring that young people's risk assessments are rigorously followed to reduce the opportunity for incidents to occur. | 21/08/2017 |

### Recommendations

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes must 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)
- Approaches to restraint should recognise that children are continuing to develop, both physically and emotionally. Any use of restraint should be suitable for the needs of the individual child. The context in which restraint is used should also recognise that, as a result of past experiences, children will have a unique understanding of their circumstances which will affect their response to restraint

by adults responsible for their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.54)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Staff are good at providing personalised care to young people. They take time to get to know young people and they draw on young people's strengths. Staff are skilled at supporting and enabling young people to engage in activities which meet their individual needs. Young people have had the opportunity to try activities such as canoeing, kayaking, walking, camping and rock climbing. This has given them the chance to discover new talents and enjoy new positive experiences. This increases young people's self-esteem and confidence. The registered manager has tailored the 12-week programme to the individual needs of the young people. This has benefited young people as it means that they engage and are willing to invest in the programme. Good-quality bunkhouses support young people's positive daily experiences. However, the main house lacks personalisation and it does not have a homely feel to it.

Young people enjoy good relationships with most of the staff team. A young person said, 'All the staff are lovely, especially my key worker, she puts forward my point of view, what I want.' Key-working sessions are good. Staff make sure that the sessions are purposeful and that they meet the aims of the placement outlined in young people's placement plans. Key-working sessions cover a range of topics, such as anger management, health, stopping smoking and reducing risk-taking behaviours. These sessions are effective and young people learn how to manage difficult situations, such as meetings with social workers and other professionals. Staff are good advocates for young people. Young people feel able to voice their opinions and the registered manager makes changes to young people's daily routines or the structures of the home based on young people's feedback or complaints.

Young people make good progress from their starting points. Staff work with the on-site education coordinator to support young people back into some form of learning. Some young people have made exceptional progress in their learning. For example, some young people have not been in education for several years. While at the home, they have completed accredited tasks that teach them about subjects such as camping and cooking, reading, essays and work experience placements. A social worker said, 'The staff have worked extremely well with my young person, setting firm boundaries and guidelines. They have encouraged education as this is a boy who didn't go to education before. He hasn't smoked cannabis since being here and they have been working with him to try to stop him smoking cigarettes. The communication is good and we come up with plans such as focusing on future goals in life. He is thinking about becoming a mechanic or youth worker. He has positive relationships with certain staff here who he perceives as being mentors. This is the beginning for him.'

The registered manager has made considerable progress regarding the matching and admission processes for young people. However, the registered manager does not

always ensure that pre-admission matching assessments are completed prior to young people arriving in emergencies. This has not had an impact on any of the young people due to the registered manager carefully considering referral information prior to agreeing placements. New documents are in place to support young people's transitions out of the home and into new placements. Staff use a task-centred document which helps to prepare young people for their move.

Independence work is a strength of this home. Staff encourage young people to take responsibility for their own care. They teach them about paying bills and other practical skills.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Young people feel safe and are safe. Good-quality risk assessments which are child focused provide staff with clear guidance as to how to keep young people safe. They are regularly updated, although it is not documented when they are updated or by whom. On occasion staff have not rigorously adhered to young people's risk management plans and this has enabled some young people to have the opportunity to engage in risk-taking behaviours, such as gaining access to vehicles. This impacts on their day-to-day safety and experiences. On one occasion, staff used de-escalation and talking to persuade a young person to hand in a concealed knife. Although this proved effective, this was not in accordance with the risk management plan and caused a delay, which could have had a significant impact on staff and the young person.

Young people are involved with their risk assessments and contribute to them. They are written clearly so that young people understand them. Staff know young people and they know their risks. Care is taken when engaging young people in group activities and as a result they are well-planned and risk assessed. This has contributed to the reduction in incidents. Young people say that they are motivated to engage in the 12-week programme and make changes to their lives. A social worker said, 'I have been to numerous children's homes and this is one of the best ones I have been to. I get daily logs. If there is a serious incident they tell me. My young person has had no physical interventions, staff have talked him down and calmed him down and I have witnessed that. Certain members of staff have been able to develop a positive relationship with him.'

Young people's risk-taking behaviours reduce. Staff are skilled at de-escalating incidents. They use their relationships with young people to engage them in discussions regarding risk-taking behaviours such as violence, aggression and running away. There has been a significant reduction in incidents. Young people rarely go missing. On occasions when young people tell staff that they want to run away, staff walk with young people regardless of the distance, talking to young people and encouraging them to return home. After young people have been missing, they do not have opportunity to speak to someone independent of the home.

When physical interventions are used, the registered manager independently speaks to the young people afterwards to gain their feedback and talk about their experience of the physical intervention. There have been a few occasions when young people have been held on the ground. The registered manager scrutinises these types of physical interventions and ensures that they are necessary. Risk management plans clearly outline what physical interventions staff are able to safely use for each individual young person. However, they do not always take into account young people's previous experiences and staff do not always talk to young people when they are first admitted regarding what physical interventions are like. While young people's debriefs after physical interventions are good, some young people continue to find some physical interventions upsetting.

Staff engage in regular safeguarding training. The registered manager ensures that staff understand how to report safeguarding concerns. The manager has taken rigorous action when safeguarding concerns have arisen and this has supported young people's safety. Management investigations are thorough and learning is incorporated into practice.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2017. He is appropriately qualified. Out of the 39 permanent members of staff, 22 are appropriately qualified. The other staff members are either in their probationary period or in the process of completing the relevant qualification. 38 members of staff have a first aid qualification.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has appointed more staff members, who have all been safely recruited. This has reduced the number of agency staff being used and has brought greater stability and consistency to the workforce and young people. Agency staff who are used have had checks and references completed by the agency they are employed by. However, the registered manager has not rigorously reassured himself regarding agency staff references. The registered manager is aware that the staff team needs to now embed changes and continue to provide good-quality care to young people.

The registered manager has made significant changes to the service. He is ambitious and has sought to change the way the service is run. For example, the 12-week programme is altered to meet the individual needs of young people, recognising that not all young people enjoy outdoor activities. He encourages staff to get to know young people and their individual needs rather than adopting a 'one-size-fits-all' model of care. This has had a positive impact on the progress that young people make. The registered manager has taken care to accept placements of young people whose needs staff are able to meet. He recognises the service's limitations, but also the strengths of the service. This has meant that young people are appropriately placed and there has been a significant reduction in incidents. New paperwork has been introduced which is much more child focused and which provides staff with clear guidance.

Supervisions are good and staff say that they feel well supported. Staff acknowledge that there have been a significant number of changes to the service and the systems that are in place. While it has been difficult for some staff members to adapt to new ways of working, most staff acknowledge that changes were necessary and that there has been a positive impact on the young people that they care for as a result. Supervisions focus on safeguarding, the young people and their progress, and training of staff. Staff say that training is good, and that there has been an improvement in this area. Management oversight is rigorous. The registered manager oversees and scrutinises all paperwork. He is quick to address any practice shortfalls.

Partnership working is good. The registered manager works with placing authorities regarding young people's progress and planning young people's transitions. The registered manager has emailed and made formal representations to placing authorities when young people have not received the service that they are entitled to. However, he has failed to escalate his concerns or ensure that he receives responses.

The registered manager is child focused. For example, he ensures that he consistently seeks the feedback of young people and he welcomes consultation with them. He is keen to hear young people's views, wishes and feelings, and has made changes because of their feedback. The registered manager has high aspirations for the young people in his care as well as the quality of care that staff provide to young people. The registered manager says, 'I have worked hard to bring staff into the same way of thinking as me. I am always asking staff is it good enough for their own child, as it should be and that is the standard I am wanting from staff. I have done a lot of management investigations and this has shown staff that they are accountable for what they are doing.'

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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:** SC020594

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Keys Education Limited

**Registered provider address:** Hurstwood Court, Laganwood House, New Hall Hey Road, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6HR

**Responsible individual:** Emma Beech

**Registered manager:** Neil Harcourt-Poole

## Inspectors

Hannah Bates: social care inspector

Louise Whittle: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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