

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	05/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC034944
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered provider address	Keys Attachment Centre, Hurstwood Court, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 6HR

Responsible individual	Julie Hamilton
Registered Manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Graham Robinson

Inspection date	05/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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	Good

SC034944

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in an environment where achievement is celebrated.
- Strong, trusting relationships form between young people and staff, providing young people with suitable role models.
- A stable and experienced staff group work collectively to inject some stability into young people's lives.
- Young people benefit from receiving a high, consistent standard of care where needs are identified and plans, strategies and risk assessments are put in place to address those needs.
- Clear boundaries and routines, along with the support of staff, help young people to make good progress in all areas of their lives.
- The educational arrangements in place for each young person, coupled with high levels of attendance, allow them to make good educational progress.
- Young people say that they feel safe living in the home.
- Challenging and unsafe behaviour is well managed in a non-punitive way that keeps young people safe.
- The home provides young people with an inclusive, non-judgemental environment where consultation and making choices is part of everyday life.
- Strong channels of communication keep young people's families and social workers well informed of the progress being made, along with events or issues that may arise.
- The home is well organised and managed.
- The manager has a clear vision of the future and the way that the home should develop. This includes improving outcomes for young people by evaluating and improving the working practices of the home.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that any information linked to safeguarding that is passed on to an external agency is also notified to Ofsted. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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
10/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/09/2015	Full	Good
23/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/10/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
This service provides children of a young age with stable, long-term placements in a place they recognise as home. Their complex needs and sometimes challenging behaviour are well managed. Integration into the local community, along with full use of community facilities, allows young people to experience a fulfilling positive social lifestyle. This helps them to progress well in all areas of their lives. Because of their age, young people are reliant on staff. They form strong and trusting relationships with them. This is helped by the high staff retention enjoyed by the home. Young people benefit from being looked after by people they know well. Staff provide them with a consistency of care and a sense of reassurance. One of the young people spoke for the others when saying 'I know the staff well, they are always there, I like them'. As a result, young people make good progress based on their starting points. For example, a social worker reported that one child 'has come a long way since the placement began and there continues to be steady progression in all areas of his life'. They went on to say that the young person 'is progressing well and is improving through the range of interventions implemented by the home'. The progress that young people make can be evidenced in planning documents, risk assessments, reports prepared for reviews and in the records showing the individual work being undertaken. These documents are individualised to reflect each young person's specific needs and are updated regularly, which keeps them current. Social workers confirm that they are kept well informed by the home. For example, one reported that 'The placement is meeting all the child's needs. The staff are very supportive, communication is excellent and we can resolve any issues that may arise promptly.' Each young person is in full-time education, attending schools in the local community. Attendance levels are high, which reflects the good educational progress being made. Staff have developed strong, professional links with schools and fulfil a parental role that is supportive to each young person. Young people's everyday health needs are fully met through community-based services. Good relationships with these services allow for healthcare matters to be addressed quickly. More specialist services can be accessed when required. Any therapeutic input linked to attachment disorder is provided separately by therapists based at a specialist therapy suite, located in the local community.	

Many activities are pre-planned to make them purposeful, to enable young people to develop social skills and promote good health. This is in addition to providing enjoyment and opportunities for young people to follow their interests and develop new ones. Young people are involved in making choices around activities and food, with staff oversight to ensure that their health is being promoted appropriately. Young people enjoy their activities, many of which are community based. They also spoke about their recent summer holiday in Wales which, based on their comments and the photographs available, they enjoyed.

Consultation levels between staff and young people are high. Young people participate in weekly meetings where they are given information and asked to make choices. For example, following a recent request, coconut milk has been added to the home's shopping list. Communication levels are high, which provides for daily, ongoing consultation between staff and young people. This gives young people some empowerment regarding certain aspects of the home's daily functioning, as well as giving them choices to make on a daily basis.

Young people's meetings are also used to give them new information or reminders about things they have spoken about previously. For example, the home has for some years, and at its own expense, provided young people with an independent advocate who visits monthly. Young people were reminded about the advocate's role at a recent meeting. Other recent topics included how to make complaints, bullying, and 'placement plans – what are they?'. The format of young people's meetings reminds children of a young age about their responsibilities to others, as well as promoting their rights.

Although not of an age to be prepared for independence, young people are given tasks and roles to undertake that provide them with useful skills. For example, one young person went through an exercise about managing the amount of money he had to spend, before he went shopping. Two others assisted a staff member with a large shop at a local supermarket. These are two examples of many that are integrated into daily life and designed to improve skills and confidence. This assists young people towards living a more independent lifestyle.

Young people live in a house that is indistinguishable from others around it and provides a warm, homely and child-friendly environment. There is space for young people to play. An area of the garden that could not be used for play previously has recently received a major overhaul. This has resulted in the creation of a new grassed area, which is proving popular with young people and is a significant addition to the home's facilities. Bedrooms are single occupancy and are personalised to suit the taste and the needs of the occupant. The overall state of repair, and quality of decor, furnishings, fixtures and equipment is good.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
All the young people are able to confirm that they feel the home is a safe place to live and they feel safe in it. A trained, experienced staff team understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. Good, cooperative working partnerships and practice with external agencies allow for multi-agency working to take place. This provides young people with greater protection. Young people live in an environment where they are kept safe. For example, risk assessments linked to safety both inside and externally to the home are in the process of being revised and updated. Service contracts are in place for emergency and other vital equipment. Fire drills take place regularly so that even the young person who is new has had the experience of evacuating the home should an emergency take place. High staffing levels reduce the chances of bullying taking place. Young people say that they are not bullied and that staff step in quickly if arguments arise. Clearly defined boundaries, along with consistent routines, help young people to feel secure. They live in an environment where progress and achievement is celebrated and rewarded. Behaviour management is well handled, with few serious incidents having taken place since the previous inspection. All incidents are monitored effectively with de-brief sessions put in place. This gives senior staff and other staff opportunities to review practice to see if lessons can be learned, with a view to improving practice. Since the previous inspection, there have been no incidents of young people going missing directly from the home. However, incidents of a young person going missing from the community have occurred. Suitable risk assessments are in place, along with procedures for staff to follow. Staff are fully aware of the procedures and protocols to follow. The only change to the staff team since the previous inspection has been the appointment of a new manager. Staff retention is high, with the core staff team having been together for some time. This has proved beneficial for young people regarding the consistency of care received, along with the levels of trust built and the depth of relationship that they create with staff. Recruitment practice and clearance procedures are thorough and meet with regulatory requirements and current guidance. Longer-serving staff are being re-checked regularly, which is deemed to be good practice. This ensures that young people are only being looked after by staff who have been suitably cleared and recruited.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager was only a week into her role when the inspection took place. This followed a successful and well-planned changeover period with the previous registered manager. The new manager has moved from a senior position in a sister home that has the same purpose and function as this one. The age range catered for is also similar. The new manager was known to the young people in the home before she took up her post. All of these factors have aided the transition. This has been the only significant change for young people regarding the staff team who look after them. Previously, the home was well organised and managed, which is another positive factor in the transition process. As a result, the home has remained stable, with young people experiencing little change or disruption to their daily lives and routines. The manager is being well supported by an experienced senior staff team as well as the other staff who make up the team. Staff morale is high and this has a positive effect on young people, who live in a happy, cohesive establishment full of good humour and appropriate laughter. The staff spoken with feel well supported, with the programmes of supervision and appraisal taking place with consistency. As well as aiding professional development, it has allowed staff to manage the change of leadership well. Staff participate in the core training programme, with all training that requires to be refreshed regularly found to be up to date. Requests have been made for new, more specific training. This helps to ensure that skills remain current to meet the needs of the existing group of young people. The internal and external monitoring of the home is good. Written reports are produced and used effectively, for example in helping to identify issues contained in the home's written development plan. This contributes to the view that managers and senior staff have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and are able to identify areas that require development. The home has a good record of compliance. At the previous inspection there were no requirements. The one recommendation made resulted in the garden area to the rear of the house being extended, which brought into use an area that was previously out of bounds for young people. This has proved to be a significant development and has been fully utilised by young people during the long school holiday.	

The notification of significant events experienced in the home since the previous inspection and sent to Ofsted was reviewed. The manager demonstrated an understanding of her responsibilities regarding notifications. An entry in the safeguarding file did generate some discussion over whether the incident was significant enough to notify Ofsted. Agreement was reached, with the threshold for notifying Ofsted having been identified.

The home has been stable since the previous inspection. The change of manager has been handled sensitively and well. Application for the new manager to be registered with Ofsted is expected to be received shortly.

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. However, 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 that 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 that 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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