

SC034944

Registered provider: Keys Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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/or behavioural difficulties, including attachment problems.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 September 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 2 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Based on their starting points when entering the home, young people make

significant progress in all areas of their lives.

- Young people who have had a poor, disrupted and sometimes traumatic start with their life experiences prior to living at the home adopt lifestyles with which they re-engage with their education and learn how to socialise through new experiences and activities.
- This home specialises in creating a warm, homely and nurturing environment for very young people, and also provides structure, boundaries and consistency. These enable young people to feel safe and secure.
- Aspirations for young people are high, with staff advocating strongly on their behalf to ensure that their rights are preserved and their outcomes maximised.
- Challenging and unsafe behaviour is well managed in a non-punitive way that keeps young people safe.
- Following a successful first year in post, a dedicated, child-focused manager is now being well supported by a staff team that is reinvesting in and developing the ethos, culture and working practices of the home.
- The search for continued improvement is ongoing, with staff prepared to critically analyse working practices to ensure that they meet the ever-changing needs of young people living in the home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The home has regained managerial stability and now needs a period of constant reflection, evaluation and consistency of working practices to ensure that it continues to move forward and progress.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/09/2016	Full	Good
10/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/09/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Continue with the current rolling programme of refurbishment to meet the short- and longer-term needs of the home in creating a more welcoming environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, section 3.7)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people currently living in the home are all in long-term, stable placements. The appointment of the current manager a year ago has allowed the home to regain its managerial stability. Although the care provided to young people was never a concern, the last year has improved the consistency of care they have received. As a result, they have all made, and continue to make, significant progress in all areas of their lives.

Over the last year, the team has remained intact, with an injection of some new staff. For young people this has meant that their strong and trusting relationships with staff have not suffered and their progress has not been impaired. All young people have benefited from living in a warm, caring and nurturing environment that allows them to reinvest in having trust in adults who genuinely care for them.

This view is supported by young people, other professionals and parents. For example, a young person told the inspector that, 'I like it here, staff are kind.' A social worker reported, 'This has been a good placement and it continues to meet his needs.' A parent said, 'The level of care is fantastic; I think the staff are amazing. He has changed so much; he is not as selfish.' Another commented, 'I have full confidence with the care he is receiving.'

The journey that young people make as they progress through the home can be evidenced in their planning documents, individual risk assessments and strategies used to manage behaviour. They are revised and updated regularly, which keeps them current. Other documents and records also capture progress. For example, there are reports written for reviews and electronic records, known as the blue book, which trace and track progress.

The home has an excellent record of re-engaging disaffected young people with their education. All young people are in full-time education, with each one achieving 100% attendance for the last academic year. The educational progress young people make is reflected in each young person's end-of-year school report. All young people have the same arrangements in place for this academic year. The home has refined its early morning daily working practice, which prepares young people for the day ahead in

school. The inspector observed this practice, which resulted in all young people reaching school in a positive frame of mind.

The arrangements to promote young people's health are good. Their everyday health needs are addressed effectively through the use of community-based facilities. More specialist services are accessed when required. For example, the intensity and frequency of aggressive bouts of one young person have reduced significantly since his medication was changed by a paediatrician. This followed representations made by staff.

Young people and staff are also supported by a range of specialist services provided by the organisation operating the home. For example, clinical psychologists make regular visits and contribute to staff training and meetings. Currently, all young people are receiving a therapeutic package linked to attachment issues, which is conducted away from the home.

Fitness, good health and healthy eating are areas that are heavily promoted by the home. Staff consult regularly with young people, educating them about the benefits of healthy eating and nutrition. Weekly activity planners build in regular exercise, such as playing football, swimming, trampolining and playing out in local parks. High staffing levels allow for individual activities and interests to be followed. For example, as well as those activities mentioned, one young person has just commenced piano lessons and another is an active member of a local scout group.

Young people meet with staff on a weekly basis; this is where choices are made about food and activities. These meetings are also used to inform and reassure young people. For example, terrorism and its effects were discussed at a recent meeting. The session was well researched and prepared by the staff running the meeting. The strength of the relationships, allied to the high levels of trust and communication that exist between young people and staff, allows for consultation to be a regular feature of daily life. For example, young people were observed in regular discussions with staff in planning, arranging and negotiating what they were going to do later.

Out of necessity for the protection of young people, and because of the distance some are from their home areas, contact arrangements are complex. Staff work flexibly and are willing to go that extra mile so that young people can sustain appropriate contact with those who are important to them. For example, during the inspection arrangements were made to meet a parent who was travelling from the other end of the country at a halfway point.

Encouraging and developing skills that aid independence start early and are part of daily life in the home. For example, young people are encouraged to take on some responsibility, such as keeping bedrooms tidy. One young person described his passion for baking. Promoting such skills gives young people a sense of responsibility as well as improving their independence.

Young people live in a home that blends well into the local community. Each young person has their own bedroom that is personalised to reflect their interests. Since the

previous inspection, a rolling programme to modernise and upgrade the fabric of the home has commenced. This has resulted in the whole of the ground floor being completely refurbished and upgraded. A similar approach is needed upstairs.

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

The systems adopted by the home to keep everyone safe are excellent. For example, detailed risk assessments, identifying risks both around the home and in the local community, are reviewed and updated regularly to keep them current. Appropriate contracts to service and maintain safety equipment are in place, adding to the security of the home.

The home has an outstanding record in keeping very vulnerable young people safe. They settle and begin to trust adults who provide them with good role models. Staff are skilled in working with damaged, sometimes traumatised, young people in a supportive and caring way. Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place and staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe.

All staff receive initial safeguarding training, which is refreshed regularly. Strong, professional relationships, based on respect for each other, exist with other agencies. For example, one professional who has dealt with the home recently stated, 'I was always very impressed that no matter which staff member I spoke with, they impressed with the knowledge they had about the young person.'

The way staff collectively manage disruptive, challenging and, at times, aggressive behaviour is outstanding. A greater emphasis on staff understanding and on incorporating theoretical models into daily practice gives them the confidence and skills to manage behaviour in a supportive, non-judgemental manner. As a result, staff remain supportive rather than being punitive. This allows young people to work through their fears and terrors in a safe and secure environment.

Incidents that have required physical intervention are well managed. Effective monitoring, evaluation and debriefing by the manager provide opportunities to explore each incident to see whether lessons can be learned and whether situations could have been handled differently.

Over a 12-month period, the number of physical intervention incidents look to be high. This can be explained by looking at the individual circumstances of the members of a young group who collectively arrived in the home with little or no self-control. In time, young people respond well to the boundaries and structures in place, which helps them to feel more safe and secure. Overall, there is a downward trend in the frequency and intensity of physical intervention incidents.

Bullying is not a concern to young people and is currently not a live issue in the home. None of the young people currently accommodated have been missing or absent without authority, which is testament to the relationships and trust they build with staff.

Staff retention is good, with a core of the staff team having worked together for a prolonged period of time. The recruitment and clearance procedures for new staff are thorough and meet with regulatory requirements and current guidance. Longer-serving staff are being rechecked every three years, which is recognised as excellent practice.

Young people settle well and thrive in a structured environment with clearly defined boundaries. Within this, young people live in a home that is warm, nurturing and provides them with appropriate affection. This is recognised and appreciated by others. For example, a social worker told the inspector, 'He has become more independent. He does lots of activities in the community, meeting friends and developing his self-confidence.' A parent commented, 'He is safe and they keep him safe.' A young person summed up his feelings when saying, 'I feel like I am growing up now.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Over recent years, the home has had a prolonged period of managerial instability. This was rectified with the appointment of the current manager a year ago. The first year has not been without its difficulties, but these difficulties have been dealt with decisively and in an appropriate manner. An infusion of new staff has refreshed a well-established, child-centred team. The home is stable and is looking for continued improvement.

The organisation and management of the home are child-focused. Staff work flexibly and with a team-centred approach that allows the needs of young people to be addressed. For example, staff are willing to work longer or with more flexibility, which has meant that the home has not had to bring in staff who are unknown to young people at times of staff shortage.

Overall, staff feel well supported. Formal supervision and performance development take place every calendar month. Young people are consulted to gain their views about staff, which makes a significant contribution towards the annual process of staff appraisal. This is a new process that is seen as an excellent development. The levels of communication between staff are high, which aids the general organisation of the home. The overall morale of staff is good and visitors immediately experience the happiness and warmth that abounds throughout the home, creating a happy and positive environment for young people.

Staff are encouraged and supported with their training needs. There are clear expectations placed on them to complete the core staff training programme. The programme develops and refreshes skills. Apart from two staff who are still in their probationary period, all staff have either gained, or are about to gain, a suitable professional qualification.

The overall monitoring of the home, both internally and externally, takes place consistently. The home's records are reviewed and evaluated by senior staff, with any weaknesses identified so that they can be quickly addressed. The manager is able to link her own critical analysis with the external observations and translate these into the home's own development and workforce planning.

The home has a good record of compliance. The report from the previous inspection contained only two recommendations, one that has been fully addressed and another that has been partially addressed. This has resulted in staff receiving specific training in radicalisation and the implementation of a rolling programme to modernise and upgrade the home. Currently, the programme is partially completed, with the whole of the ground floor being refurbished. A similar approach is needed with regard to the upstairs.

The home has had a more stable year from a staffing and managerial perspective. The standard of care has never been impaired and has always been good in recent times. Young people are having their complex needs addressed in a caring and systematic way as they move forward and continue to progress in all areas of their lives.

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 differences 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 whom 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: SC034944

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Hurstwood Court, New Hall Hey Road, Rossendale BB4 6HR

Responsible individual: Julie Hamilton

Registered manager: Maureen Gibbons

Inspector

Graham Robinson, social care inspector

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