

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	13/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC064500
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered provider address	Keys Attachment Centre, Hurstwood Court, Rawtensall, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 6HR

Responsible individual	Julie Hamilton
Registered manager	Oliver Birtwistle
Inspector	Graham Robinson

Previous Inspection date	15/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC064500

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home provides young people, who in the past have had poor life experiences, with a high level of care leading them to live a lifestyle that is more age appropriate and socially acceptable.
- Staff create a warm, homely and nurturing environment in which young people can feel safe and secure.
- Clear boundaries and routines, along with the support of staff, help young people to make good progress in all areas of their lives.
- Strong and trusting relationships form between young people and staff. Building trust and getting to know and understand the needs of young people helps to keep behaviour management issues to a minimum.
- Young people benefit from receiving a high, consistent standard of care in which needs are identified and plans, strategies and risk assessments look to address those needs.
- 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 in which consultation and choice are part of everyday life.
- Good educational arrangements and good levels of attendance translate into young people making good educational progress.
- Social workers report excellent relationships with staff and are confident that young people are kept safe.
- The home is well organised and managed.
- The manager has a clear vision of the future and the way in which the home should develop. This includes improving outcomes for young people by evaluating and improving the working practices of the home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/01/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/07/2014	Full	Adequate
12/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people who have complex and challenging needs live in a home in which they are well cared for and kept safe. Many have had chaotic lifestyles and poor experiences with adults prior to being admitted to the home. Boundaries, routine, nurture and care help them to settle and experience a full and meaningful lifestyle, both educationally and socially. Integration into and use of community facilities give young people new perceptions and perspectives, which help them to progress well in all areas of their lives. The strong bonds and trusting relationships that develop between young people and staff give young people security and a feeling of being safe. Staff are resilient and determined to build relationships with young people who can be challenging and find it difficult to trust in adults. The motivated and energetic staff team members are skilled at managing various behaviour traits due to their understanding of a young person's needs. This results in young people making good progress based on their starting points. The home works cohesively and collaboratively with partner agencies, which recognise and appreciate the quality of care given to young people. For example, a social worker reported that, 'Staff are caring and are attuned to the young people's needs.' Another commented 'The home is a nurturing environment where the young people are given all possible opportunities to thrive.' Young people benefit from receiving care that is consistent and of a high quality. This reflects the team-centred approach that proves to be so effective. Aspirations for young people are high and there is a genuine desire among the staff team to achieve the maximum potential for each young person in their care. Young people recognise the support they receive. This was summed up by one young person who said, 'Staff are alright. They are there for you.' The high standards of communication that exist in the home underpin the high levels of consultation that is a feature of daily life. For example, throughout the inspection staff and young people were observed in discussion with each other. Young people were seen to be making choices about what they were going to do and what they wanted to eat. This level of consultation empowers them to make genuine choices and to have some level of influence on the daily routines of the home. The progress that young people make is reflected and evidenced in planning documents, risk assessments and the high-quality reports prepared for reviews.	

They are individualised and updated regularly, which keeps them current. The introduction of a psychologically informed pathway, which includes an assessment and a system outcome measurement, adds to the evidence available.

Positive responses received from social workers show that they recognise the progress that young people make. For example one said, 'Although he has his moments, the home is meeting his needs.' Another noted that, 'Staff put the needs of young people first.' They went on to say, 'He continues to make good progress both at school and at (Name of home).'

The arrangements to meet young people's educational needs are good. All young people are in full-time education attending a school operated by this organisation group. One young person splits his time between school and a local college at which he is undertaking a course that meets his individual needs and requirements. Attendance levels are high, contributing significantly to the good educational progress that young people are making, based on their starting point.

Young people are all registered and receive community-based services that meet their daily health needs. More specialist services are accessed as required. For example, one young person has just benefited from the services of a podiatrist. Buying in the therapeutic interventions provided by the organisation is an option for placing authorities. The whole combination of services available to young people ensures that their physical, emotional and mental health needs are being fully addressed.

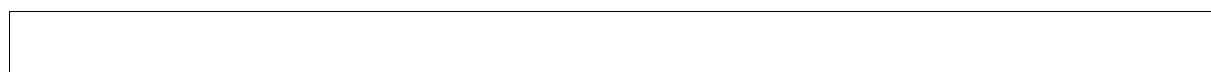
Activities are pre-planned to make them purposeful, develop social skills and promote good health. Most are community based, which helps young people to integrate. For example, one young person has joined a local junior football team, others enjoy being members of the local scout group and attending a local youth club. This gives young people an opportunity to make age-appropriate friendships, which is a boost to their self-confidence and helps them improve their social skills.

Young people are encouraged to take on certain tasks and responsibilities around the home which provide them with useful skills. For example, one young person was planning to do some baking with a staff member on their return from school. They are introduced to a more formal programme to monitor their abilities and develop skills that should serve them well when they prepare for independence.

Young people live in a house that is indistinguishable from others around it. Young people sometimes cause damage to the property. Damage is repaired quickly to provide a homely environment that provides a warm atmosphere in which young people can relax. Bedrooms are single occupancy and are personalised to suite the taste and needs of the occupant. The overall state of repair, quality of decor, furnishings, fixtures and equipment are good.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people, who can be vulnerable and at risk, live in an environment in which they are kept safe and feel safe and secure. This is acknowledged by young people, one of whom said, 'The staff look after me and make sure I am alright.' Up-to-date assessments of risk covering the home, locality and activities, along with the regular servicing of safety equipment and good working practices, all contribute towards the environment being kept safe. The home has in place appropriate procedures to safeguard young people. Potential incidents linked to safeguarding are being reported to the appropriate agencies in a timely manner. Staff demonstrate an understanding of their role and responsibility in keeping young people safe, with their training being refreshed on a regular basis. Good, professional working relationships are maintained with the external agencies charged with keeping young people safe. This results in young people benefiting from a multi-disciplinary approach to safeguarding issues, which helps to protect them. Clearly defined boundaries, along with consistent routines, help young people to feel secure. They live in a non-punitive environment in which reward exceeds sanction. Bullying is taken seriously, and staff act proactively to stop and address issues of bullying. This adds to a sense of security for young people. Behavioural incidents, including those requiring physical intervention, are managed effectively. Following an incident, a de-briefing session with young people and staff provides opportunities to reflect and explore each incident to see if lessons can be learned to improve future practice, and reduce the number of incidents taking place. Records of incidents are thorough, up to date and well maintained. Young people rarely go missing or have unauthorised absences from the home. A flurry of minor incidents in the early summer period was well managed and there has been no repeat since then. Risk assessments, and a guide for staff on how to act should a young person go missing, are in place. They take account of locally agreed protocols with the police. Overall, staff retention is good. Longer-serving staff are being re-checked regularly which is deemed to be good practice. Recruitment and clearance procedures are thorough and meet with regulatory requirement and current guidance. 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 is experienced, having been in post for some years. He has the experience, knowledge and confidence to challenge others to ensure the best possible outcome for the young people in his care. There is an air of calmness about him that transfers to the staff group and young people. The home is well organised and managed. The manager is well supported by the whole staff team, who buy into the ethos, culture and working practices that have been developed in the home over the years. Some challenging and, at times, particularly challenging behaviour by a young person new to the home has not reduced staff morale. Young people benefit from living in a happy, cohesive establishment full of good humour and appropriate laughter. A formal programme of staff supervision takes place regularly, along with the annual appraisal of staff. Staff report that they feel well supported. Senior staff, along with the manager, take an active role in the home and are not isolated from the main staff group. This fosters teamwork and proves to be an effective component in the monitoring process. New staff report that they feel well supported and are quickly made to feel part of the team. All staff are expected to keep their training up to date through the core staff training programme. Training for new staff commences immediately. The training programme improves the knowledge and skills that staff possess, giving them the ability to look after young people with ever-changing and more complex needs. The internal and external monitoring of the home is good. Written reports are produced and used effectively to help populate written development plans for the home. This shows that the manager and senior staff have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and can identify areas that require development. The home has a good record of compliance, although at the previous inspection no requirements or recommendations were made. However, since the previous inspection the manager has introduced a number of new initiatives designed to develop practice and improve outcomes for young people. For example, consultation questionnaires for young people have been revised and updated, a new workforce development plan has been introduced, incentive plans for young people have been reviewed, a missing-from-home tracker has been introduced and a new outcome development tool known as octopus has been devised and introduced. They reflect the home's determination to move forward.	



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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