

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	29/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC370949
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bettercare Keys Ltd
Registered provider address	The Keys Group, Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Kelly Looker
Registered manager	Michelle Davie
Inspector	Michael Mulvaney

Inspection date	29/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in 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

SC370949

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Children make good progress because they live in this home. There are resilient and positive relationships between the staff and the children. Staff build these relationships on a sound knowledge of the children's needs.
- Some children do go missing from this home. Staff complete direct one-to-one work regarding the concerns and risks for children when they go missing and these occasions have reduced over recent months.
- Some of the children arrived at this home with a significant history of being at risk of sexual exploitation. Since living in this home there has been a reduction in this risk. The children allow the staff to protect them and children make more positive choices about their own safety.
- Children are making good progress and, in some cases, better than expected progression in their education. This is significant, as some of the children had previously not been in formal education for some time before living in this home.
- The manager skilfully organises the staff to deliver an effective standard of care to the children. She closely scrutinises all case recordings to ensure that these are now up to the required standard. As a result, staff are working with the most up-to-date information.
- There are a number of risk assessments for the home. The manager has not collated them into a single succinct location risk assessment. As a result, staff and others are not aware of the impact of these issues on the children. Robust individual risk assessments minimise the impact of this shortfall.

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home is suitably located so that children are safeguarded effectively and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans. Under regulation 46, the registered provider should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks. In particular, it must analyse these risks and the strategies used for managing those risks. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a large private organisation and provides long-term placements on behalf of local authorities. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
10/12/2015	Full	Good
29/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/08/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children are making good progress because they live in this home. The staff spend a great deal of time getting to know the children's concerns and the important matters in their lives. Staff are observed using a calm, sensitive and appropriately humorous approach when talking to the children. Staff thoughtfully use one-to-one key work sessions to discuss subjects which affect the children's lives. As a result children develop positive relationships with staff. Children are making good progress in their education, and in some cases better progress than expected. Children are attending school or an alternative provision on a full-time basis. This is a significant improvement for some of the children who previously had not been in formal education. One child has made progress at school supported by the staff in this home. The school comments: 'This child has been at our school for 18 months. They have worked very hard and throughout the last few terms has showed phenomenal progress. She is now looking at completing work at entry level 1 for mathematics and English literature where she had previously been predicted a lower grade. All of their social and educational progress has been very good. Children are much more integrated into the school and this has been positively supported by the home.' Consequently, these children will be able to gain knowledge and qualifications that will help as they progress to further education, training or into work. Interesting activities, such as trips to the cinema, roller-skating and to theme parks are arranged through the key work sessions or in the regular community meetings held between the children and the staff. These meetings also provide an opportunity for the children's views to be heard in decisions about aspects of the home. Recently, during a discussion about the decoration in the 'den' (a games room area) the children requested a lighter colour of paint. Staff have acted on this and completed the redecoration during this inspection. The children commented positively about this to staff. Children are helped to develop their ability to manage money and to budget for themselves. The provider has a well-defined independent skills assessment tool. This helps children to build confidence in cooking, doing their laundry and other self-help skills in the safety of this home prior to leaving. As a result, they are learning independent living skills, which staff support and encourage. Children make and maintain relationships with health professionals, such as doctors and dentists, through the support of the staff. Healthy options offered on the menu, which children participate in choosing, provide a balanced diet. Children	

engage in activities. For example, one child has been encouraged to take up athletics and attends a running club twice a week. As a result, they keep fit and make friends outside of the home.

The provider has access to psychological services to help develop the staff's understanding of the children. This service completes direct work with the children if required. As a result, there is easy access to specialist help if children's assessed needs are for this input. These services also raise staff awareness of alternative ways of developing a better working relationship with children through a greater knowledge of their needs.

Children are supported to have regular ongoing contact with their extended families. This maintains important connections to significant people and helps the children to understand their cultural and historical family backgrounds. Staff will travel with children to supervise contact when appropriate, and families have visited the home to promote these relationships.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children say that they feel safe in this home. One child commented: 'I feel safe in this home and would tell other children that it is safe to live here.' There is a high level of supervision and monitoring of the children from a staff team which is flexible and highly observant of changes in the children's behaviour. Staff are alert to these changes as they recognise that these can be indicators of anxiety or concern. Staff use their positive relationships to seek out underlying causes of these changes, to reassure themselves and the children that they remain safe and well. Some children have been missing from this home. The home uses the support of an external agency which liaises with the children when they return. Staff also complete direct one-to-one work regarding the concerns and risks for children when they go missing from the home. This has seen these occasions reduce over recent months. A well-defined protocol informs the staff of what action to take should a child go missing from the home. Staff are alert to the risks and concerns that are present in the community, given the history of the children living in this home. Some of the children arrived with a significant history of being at risk of sexual exploitation. Since living in this home, this risk has been reduced as the staff have developed a relationship with the children, which means that they allow the staff to protect them and make more positive choices about their own safety.	

The manager has monitored the safeguarding risks in the home. She has notified Ofsted of an allegation made by a child concerning the conduct of a member of staff. The manager has liaised with the designated officer for safeguarding in the local authority, who did not feel that the allegation met the threshold for a safeguarding investigation and requested that the manager investigate this within the staff conduct policy. A review of this investigation carried out during this inspection demonstrates a robust enquiry, including discussions with the child and other staff and the outcome was that there was no evidence to corroborate the allegation.

There have been no physical interventions since the last inspection, as staff have developed skills in managing the children's behaviour without the need to restrain. Children can earn extra activity money through rewards for good behaviour, which the children have responded to. There have been many more positive rewards than negative consequences as the children's behaviour has improved.

The manager has not collated a number of risk assessments into a relevant location risk assessment which describes the risks and other factors in the area. Consequently, this may have had a detrimental effect on the staff's understanding of features in the locality, which may place children at risk. Staff use positive individual risk assessments for each child, which minimises the impact on the children of this deficit. For example, staff understand the risks pertaining to searching for a missing child at night. They have a readily available safety kit, including torches and high visibility jackets that they wear if leaving the building in the dark.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has the national vocational qualification level 3 diploma in childcare. She is currently attending a level 5 diploma course in leadership and management. She has worked in this home as registered manager for three years. She skilfully manages the home to deliver an effective standard of care to the children. The manager closely scrutinises all case recordings to ensure that these are now up to the required standard. As a result, they now meet the standards that the manager expects and, consequently, meet the requirement set at the previous inspection. This monitoring also enables her to measure the progress that the children have made because of living in this home. Her proactive monitoring of the staff interacting with the children has seen concerning incidents reduce, attendance	

at school improve, and children are engaging in positive activities which support their development. Social workers and other professionals report on the success of the placement.

The manager ensures that all recordings of rewards and negative consequences are appropriate, as well as fair and reasonable. Staff are encouraged to reflect in supervision on these measures, to ensure that they continually motivate the children to improve their behaviour. The manager also analyses the incident records to confirm that they are complete and signed off. This further reassures her that staff are reporting events correctly and alerting other agencies as required by regulation.

Children's needs are being met as described in the statement of purpose. The manager meets with the independent visitor to review the actions required from these visits. Detailed strategies are put in place to ensure that she rectifies any reported deficiencies quickly. The manager has been in contact with the placing authorities seeking updates to care plans. She is resolute when holding these agencies to account for information. This means that the staff have relevant and current information to work safely with the children. As a result, staff can recognise the progress children have made.

Regular supervision and observations of the staff working with the children provide the manager with information that helps her to identify and take action to prevent poor practice. These supervision meetings detail any concerns staff may have and help the manager to ensure that safe care plans are being followed. Training and staff care are also discussed at these meetings. All staff have the required level 3 diploma, which means that they have the relevant knowledge to work with these children. Routine staff training also ensures that skills and abilities can develop within the staff group.

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 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 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for children looked after and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016