

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC386502
Inspector	Sharon Lloyd
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Keys Education Limited
Registered person address	Hurstwood Court, Laganwood House New Hall Hey Road ROSSENDALE Lancashire BB4 6HR
Responsible individual	Marc Murphy
Registered manager	Jane Louise Vowles
Date of last inspection	13/05/2014

Inspection date	28/11/2014
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 13 October 2014. She provides satisfactory leadership and management of the home. Six recommendations were made at the last inspection, where the home was judged adequate for overall effectiveness. Four recommendations have been fully addressed and demonstrate adequate improvement in the home's practice.

The system for recruiting staff to the home is more robust so that any previously raised concerns about an applicant's practice are appropriately explored. This ensures as far as possible that those working at the home are suitable people.

The manager has introduced improved systems to support inexperienced staff with the key worker role. This has helped them to be more effective advocates for children. In particular, the home has improved its partnership working and advocates well with placing authorities and schools. As a result, all children have appropriate education provision.

Staff are regularly supervised and supported. They have completed some additional training to meet the needs of particular children since the last inspection. This has helped them to improve their understanding of children's needs and respond more effectively. For example, their better understanding of behaviour associated with children's diagnosed conditions is helping them to use more effective individual behaviour management strategies.

The home regularly reviews children's risk assessments at handover and team meetings. This helps to ensure that staff are familiar with and alert to individual children's risk taking behaviour and that take appropriate action to protect children. For example, they ensure that children who smoke cigarettes hand in their lighters at the end of each day. This promotes children's safety and protects them from the

risk of fire.

Some shortfalls in the quality of records remain and the manager is taking steps to address these. For example, she is promoting improvement in the daily records which currently provide insufficient detail to be a valuable record of a child's progress and experiences in the home.

Although the home continues to pursue placing authorities for copies of statutory review reports, gaps in children's records remain. For example, the result of all reviews of placement and education plans are not held on children's files. Personal education plans have been obtained since the last inspection but some of these are not up to date. For example, they do not hold current details of children's schools.

Since the last inspection, children have made a satisfactory level of progress. The home continues to seek children's views about all aspects of their day to day care and their individual lives. For example, children chose not to go on a holiday over the summer, preferring instead to have days out together and individually.

The home continues to promote contact with families. It supports parents to make and renew strong and appropriate bonds with their children. Parents and social workers report they are satisfied with the way the home looks after children. They say children are happy at the home and that staff communicate very well with them. This keeps them informed and helps them to be involved in decisions made about their children's lives.

Safeguarding procedures within the home continue to be good. No children have been missing or at known risk of exploitation since the last inspection. Children are supervised and kept safe when using the internet and social media. They participate in regular fire drills and are supported to take considered risks in accordance with their age and level of development. For example, some develop confidence and skills by going out unsupervised and mixing with peers.

The level of restraint remains low. The home works in partnership with the local police, who intervene positively to assist staff with behaviour management where appropriate.

This strategy is not wholly successful. Some children have faced criminal charges when behaviour management strategies have been unsuccessful in preventing them from causing criminal damage in the home.

Education outcomes have been mixed. Some children have been excluded from school since the last inspection. The education outcomes for these children are beginning to improve as a result of daily one to one tuition from a home teaching service. Other children are beginning to benefit from renewed engagement with education on a limited timetable. While attendance and achievement levels are not consistently good, early signs are that children's life chances are improving as a result of their recent progress.

Children's health needs continue to be adequately met. They attend health appointments and receive the treatment they need to promote their physical good health. They receive good information that helps them to understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to make informed decisions about their own health. Some continue to smoke and the home's attempts to dissuade them through education and practical support have been unsuccessful. This threatens their long term health.

The home ensures that children are referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service when they need emotional or mental health support. Some children are supported to attend therapy within the organisation. Not all children engage well with these services and this means they do not always receive the support they need to develop good emotional and mental health.

The manager knows the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She effectively monitors and reports on the operation of the home and the quality of care, including children's progress, behaviour management practices and record keeping. By identifying areas for development, she promotes continuous improvement. She addresses actions raised in reports of visits by independent visitors. For example, she is introducing more appropriate behaviour management strategies by reducing the use of sanctions and increasing positive incentives for acceptable behaviour.

The manager does not receive adequate levels of support and supervision. For example, in the six months since commencement in post, she has had three formal supervision sessions. This is not sufficient to help a new manager develop the skills, confidence and competence to provide strong leadership.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately operated. The home is registered for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/05/2014	Full	adequate
31/01/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
25/10/2013	Full	adequate
29/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by the registered person receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. In particular, ensure that the manager is properly managed and supported and received regular supervision by an appropriately qualified and experienced person. (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	31/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the result of all reviews of placement and education plans are recorded on the child's file. In particular, continue to pursue personal education plans from placing authorities (NMS 25.8)

- ensure that information about the children is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to them when they access their files now or in the future. (22.5)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.