

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	13/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC386505
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Keys Education Limited
Registered provider address	Hurstwood Court, Laganwood House, New Hall Hey Road, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6HR

Responsible individual	Marc Murphy
Registered manager	Michael Merrison
Inspector	Lisa Mulcahy & Nick Veysey

Inspection date	13/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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

SC386505

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in a caring and supportive children's home that is making a positive difference to their lives.
- Young people feel safe and are adequately safeguarded due to the robust safeguarding practice in the home.
- The manager and staff support and promote the education of young people. Young people often make remarkable progress in education.
- The health needs of young people are well met and understood by the manager and staff.
- Young people have positive relationships with the manager and staff.
- Young people's views, wishes and feelings are regularly sought and valued. Consequently, young people are fully involved in decision-making about their care and their futures.
- Effective partnership working promotes the safety and well-being of young people and ensures that they receive the appropriate support and intervention in relation to their education, health, emotional well-being and safety.
- The quality of risk assessments has improved in the home. Risk assessments clearly outline individual risks to young people and how they are managed.
- Safer recruitment practices are in place to ensure that young people are only cared for by suitable members of staff.
- The staff team is supported by a committed and enthusiastic manager.
- The home has had no deputy manager for some time now, which has impacted on the frequency and quality of supervision provided to staff.

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

Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meet(s) the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development, receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b)(c))	31/01/2017

Recommendation

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

- Ensure that there are clear arrangements in place to maintain effective management when the registered manager is absent, off duty or on leave ('Guide to the children's homes regulation including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20). This is with particular regard to the deputy manager's vacant position.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is one of several owned and managed by a limited company. The home provides care and support for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The registered manager also oversees a one-bedded home within the company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/11/2015	Full	Good
29/09/2015	Full	Inadequate
05/03/2015	Full	Adequate
27/08/2014	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people receive a good quality of care that is making a positive difference to their lives. They live in a warm, nurturing and supportive home where they receive high-quality, individualised care from a committed staff team that strives to ensure that their needs are met well and that outcomes are improved for them. Staff form positive relationships with young people and spend time talking, listening and interacting with them. A social worker said, 'Staff have always gone out of their way to support the young person and have given her a period of stability.' The young person said, 'This is the longest placement I have had. I usually break placements down but have not here because it is so good. The manager and staff never give up on me.' The managers make the decision to agree for a young person to come to live at the home only when they have received sufficient information from the placing authority. They carefully work out whether they can effectively meet the young person's assessed needs and fully consider the impact that the young person moving in will have on the young people already living there. Young people receive a warm welcome when they first move in and said that they are soon made to feel at home. The manager and staff have played active roles in making sure that young people who live a long way from their homes have access to the health and education interventions that meet their assessed needs in the local area. The manager quickly found an appropriate education and training placement for a young person, who had previously been out of education. The staff have supported the young person's attendance at the college and promoted his motivation to learn and develop his skills. The manager also ensured that support was available to promote the young person's emotional needs. An education professional said, 'The young person has come on [in] leaps and bounds and is making so much progress I am using him as a good example to other young people who have been out of education.' Another young person was supported to enrol on a college course where she is doing exceptionally well. Furthermore, she has been supported to apply to a number of universities and has some interviews to attend for this. The young person and staff are very excited and proud about this achievement. Young people's health needs are known and understood by staff. They support young people's health well by providing sensitive, nurturing care that promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Specialist support is sought for young people as necessary, including support from an asthma specialist and young person's alcohol and substance misuse services. A young person's management of his asthma has improved, and another young person is no longer misusing substances and alcohol due to the specialist support that they have received.	

Therapeutic support is in place for staff and young people, which has contributed to improvement in the management and emotional well-being of a young person who has recently moved into the home. A nurse with responsibility for children who are looked after said, 'The staff have always consulted with me regarding any health, risk-taking or emotional well-being issues in respect of young people, including seeking advice on low mood and self-harming.'

The arrangements for managing young people's medication are thorough and safe. Young people are supported to keep and manage their own medication safely, based on a detailed assessment of risk, and staff are confident that the young person is able to use the medication in line with the prescription. Staff also take steps to ensure that young people who keep their own medicine use it, know what to do if they forget to take it and have their prescription reviewed by the doctor.

Contact is promoted and well supported by the staff. They have developed positive relationships with parents and are proactive in ensuring that contact is safe, productive and enjoyable for young people. They maintain regular contact with parents and keep them fully updated on issues relating to their child and the progress that they are making.

The views, wishes and feelings of young people are regularly ascertained through key-work sessions, young people's meetings, statutory children looked after reviews and everyday conversations with the registered manager and staff. They are clearly taken into account when plans are being made for them or about the home. For example, the young people were involved in planning the current refurbishment in the home.

The home is welcoming and offers a warm, homely atmosphere. It is a very busy home, but this does not affect the atmosphere. Young people's bedrooms are nicely decorated and well furnished. The home is currently in the process of being refurbished in parts. For example, a new kitchen has been fitted, and wooden flooring was being fitted during the inspection. The manager is keen to ensure that the home is a nice environment for the young people to live in.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people feel safe and are protected from harm. They said that staff listen to their worries and help them to feel safe. The manager takes prompt and decisive action when there are concerns about young people's safety, including complaints	

against people working at the home. He works effectively with social workers, the local authority safeguarding team and other partner agencies, to manage risk and protect young people. A young person said, 'Safeguarding is a priority for the manager and staff. They will do whatever it takes to keep us safe.'

Staff understand and actively assess risks to young people's safety. Detailed and continually updated written risk assessments identify specific risks faced by individual young people, and there are suitable protective plans to manage these risks. Over time, risks have reduced, and young people are increasingly safe from abuse, exploitation, bullying, aggression, self-harm and the dangers associated with using alcohol and drugs.

The registered manager and staff have a clear understanding of the risks that young people face when they go missing from the home. Appropriate action is taken to ensure the quick safe return of young people when they are missing. When young people return home, they receive a warm welcome home, their welfare is checked and arrangements are made for an independent return interview. This enables an understanding of why young people are missing, the risks that they faced when missing and how further missing-from-care episodes might be prevented. The robust procedures in place have resulted in a reduction of missing-from-home episodes for young people.

Staff provide young people with clear and reasonable boundaries that encourage positive behaviour. They have good insight about how young people's previous experiences impact on their sense of safety and respond sensitively to help young people when they struggle to control their behaviour. They work closely with young people to find out how best to help them when they are upset. They communicate effectively and calmly with young people to help them to understand what is expected of them. This includes giving young people time to process information and to reflect on what has happened. Staff are patient and make every effort to help young people to manage their feelings and frustrations constructively, regardless of the challenges. Bespoke training about the needs of a particular young person has built staff's skills and confidence in engaging with the young person and helped the young person to control his behaviour.

Physical intervention is used in the home as a last resort when other strategies, including de-escalation, have been unsuccessful. Physical intervention is only used to prevent harm or damage. The records relating to physical intervention are clear and detailed. A de-brief always takes place between the registered manager, staff and young people, following a physical intervention to help them to reflect on what happened and on what can be learned from the incident.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has a suitable professional qualification and considerable experience of working with young people and of leading this children's home. He is also the registered manager of a one-bedded home within the same company. He ensures that the home runs effectively and consistently in the best interests of young people. He has positive relationships with young people and strives to ensure that they receive a high quality of care to improve outcomes for them. A young person said, 'The best thing about the home is the manager. He does not get enough credit for all that he does.' The manager is not yet supported by a deputy manager. He feels that this is having an impact on the support that he is able to provide to his staff team. However, he does not feel that this is impacting on the quality of care provided to young people. A member of staff said, 'We support the manager as much as possible, but this is difficult when we are on shift, as the young people take priority. We would really benefit from a deputy manager in the home.' There has been significant delay in recruiting to the deputy manager post as a suitable applicant has not been identified until recently. The relevant checks are being undertaken on the successful applicant. A comprehensive management induction plan is in place for him when he takes up his position in the new year. Staff have not received formal supervision on a regular basis. There are limited records of supervision on file for staff and they are not all signed. Records do not demonstrate that supervision effectively reflects on practice or on the overall experiences and progress of young people or promotes professional development. The lack of effective supervision does not provide staff with the support that they need to ensure that they are providing a good quality of care and progressing their professional development. Despite the shortfalls in supervision, the registered manager promotes regular training opportunities for staff. All staff are suitably qualified or working towards their qualification. The home's recruitment practices ensure that only suitable people work with young people. A clear record is kept of all relevant checks, including references and qualifications. Overseas checks have been completed on newly appointed staff from other countries, and these are translated into English. The new staff do not have experience of working in a children's home setting, so the registered manager ensures that rotas are carefully planned to enable them to always be on duty with at least two experienced members of staff. Furthermore, there is a robust induction process for new members of staff. Consequently, young people continue to receive a good quality of care, despite new members of staff lacking experience and relevant qualifications. The manager has developed positive working relationships with young people's	

social workers, schools, colleges and other partner agencies. He actively engages with the placing authority to contribute to young people's plans and make sure that plans continue to meet their assessed and changing needs. For example, he is actively pursuing a suitable education placement for a young person who is not currently attending school and has requested a planning meeting with the placing authority to clarify a young person's pathway plan. A professional said, 'I have worked with lots of children's homes and I have not come across this level of commitment to young people before.'

The home has effective monitoring and review systems in place. This enables the leaders and managers to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the home and areas for development. The registered manager responds swiftly to recommendations made through the external monitoring by the independent person. The effective response to the monitoring and review of the home means that any minor shortfalls identified or dips in the quality of care are quickly rectified, practice is strengthened and young people's continuing progress is central to the home's practice. For example, the manager has identified that specific areas for development in the home include improvements in recording systems in the home and the consultation with young people, parents and professionals. The requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed, which demonstrates the home's capacity for continual improvement to ensure that young people continue to have positive experiences and improved outcomes.

The home is functioning in line with its statement of purpose. This document clearly sets out the ethos, aims and objectives of the home, which are clearly embedded in practice in the home. 'Our aim is to create a warm and caring environment where young people can come to terms with their past and prepare for their future.'

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 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 whom 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, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children 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 2017