

SC386522

Registered provider: Keys Education Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and managed.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 November 2017

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 12 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Young people with complex and challenging needs are making sustained progress in their lives because of the high quality of care that they receive from staff at the home.
- Staff are skilled at providing individualised, nurturing care, which is underpinned by a working knowledge of attachment theory. As a result, young people feel truly valued and this supports young people to make progress.
- Young people say that they love living in the home and have exceptionally positive relationships with staff.
- Staff excel at undertaking creative innovative work with young people in areas such as keeping themselves safe and anger management. Young people report that this work helps them, and supports them with their progress.
- Staff understand the vulnerabilities of the young people very well, and as a result take prompt and effective action when safeguarding concerns arise.
- Young people are safe in this home due to highly effective planning. This means that young people can access a range of activities to widen their experiences in a way which keeps them and other young people safe.
- Staff are strong advocates for young people and robustly challenge local authorities on behalf of young people when they consider their response is not sufficient to their role.
- The manager and the staff team are committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for young people, and have high aspirations for the young people they care for.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager needs to complete the level 5 diploma in leadership and management.
- The registered manager needs to improve recording systems, particularly in respect of whether return interviews have been carried out, and ensure that clear records are kept when an allegation is made. These records should include the outcome of any investigation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
22/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/11/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
Fitness of manager For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has by the relevant date attained— the level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) or a qualification, which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma. The relevant date is — in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing the home. (Regulation 28(2)(c)(3)(a))	12/01/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person must only accept children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of young people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. With particular reference to the setting and reviewing of achievable targets, which demonstrate how children are supported to achieve their targets. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people live in a warm and homely environment where they receive an exceptionally high level of care from an experienced and stable staff team. Staff have successfully managed to create a home environment which replicates family life. The home is well decorated, and has recently had a new kitchen and bathroom fitted. Young people choose the décor of their home and their bedrooms. This helps them feel valued and settled in the home. One young person reported, 'I love it here. I love my bedroom. I chose how I wanted my room; I've got unicorn wallpaper. Staff are good at making tea and looking after us.'

Exceptionally positive relationships exist between young people and staff. Young people seek staff out after school to share how their day at school has been, and there was much hilarity in the home at times. There is a lot of rapport and banter between young people and staff, which creates a positive atmosphere in the home. Young people could not speak highly enough about the staff and how they have helped them. Consequently, young people enjoy settled placements, invest into the home and report that they love living there. One young person reported, 'They have supported me going to meetings. They both have always been there for me.' Another young person commented, 'Staff have helped me when I have felt down. To me that's brilliant. They talk to you, have a laugh and say it's not all that bad, things will be all right for you. They give us all the support they can.'

Staff place high priority on young people's education and, as a result, young people attend school and make good progress in their education. One young person who has recently left the home completed an animal management course, and another young person is attending a vocational construction course. Staff have a good understanding of young people's educational progress, and support young people with this at the home by helping them with homework, and through excellent communication with education professionals. Staff advocate effectively for young people to ensure their continued place at school when this is under threat. As a result, one young person kept his school place, which has enabled him to continue with his education.

Staff encourage and support young people to participate in a wide range of interests and activities, such as local music groups, as they recognise the importance of these activities in increasing young people's confidence and self-esteem. Young people are involved in the Children in Care Council and have roles such as young editor for 'Become' (formerly known as the Who Cares Trust). This has involved young people attending meetings in London with staff, and through this involvement, they have promoted change to support the needs of young people in the care system. This equips young people with new skills and improves their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people receive well-planned, individualised care. The company therapist has input into developing and reviewing young people's plans, and all staff are trained in attachment theory and use this as a basis of their work with young people. This means that young people receive a good-quality therapeutic approach to their care, which supports them to address their individual behaviour and vulnerabilities.

Staff ensure that young people have individualised independence plans in place which include clear targets about what skills they need to learn, from budgeting to finding their way around the local area. This work is regularly reviewed and new targets are set, which ensures that young people develop a wide range of skills to prepare them for adulthood. Staff also perform work with young people specific to their individual needs, for example watching a DVD on best interests decision making with young people to help them understand processes and assessments they may be involved in as they approach adulthood.

Staff prepare young people well for transitions in their lives. For one young person who has left the home since the last inspection, staff supported her in finding suitable accommodation and supported her to personalise the accommodation and make it nice for her to live in. Her leaving was marked with a party and a thoughtful leaving present. She remains in touch with the staff, which ensures that she can maintain relationships which have been important to her.

Young people play a full part in decision-making in the home. Staff hold weekly young people's meetings, which young people really value. Staff make these fun and informative for young people, and find creative ways of helping young people to develop skills to keep themselves safe. Young people are consulted continually, and their views are truly central to the running of the home. Young people know how to complain and feel that staff listen to their views. Staff have created a 5-star value approach, which outlines the key values of the home including consideration, respect and caring and sharing. One of the key values is discussed at the end of every young people's meeting to support young people's understanding of the shared values of the home, and tolerance and diversity.

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

Young people feel safe in the home and feel that staff support them to stay safe. For young people who have high-risk behaviours there is a strong robust response from staff, which ensures that young people become increasingly safe. Highly effective planning manages and minimises risks, inside and out of the home. Staff understand individual risks such as self-harm or child sexual exploitation, and know what actions to take to reduce these risks. This work is underpinned by clear, thorough risk assessments. Risk assessments are kept up to date and reviewed. A social worker reported, 'I do feel that [name] is safe whilst living at [name of home]. It is clear from my involvement that the staff care a great deal about [name's] well-being and ensuring he and others are kept safe.'

Staff understand the vulnerabilities of the young people they are looking after, and because they know the young people so well they can identify issues of concern quickly. For example, inappropriate messages from a male were found on a young person's phone. Because they were alert to comments she made and changes to her presentation, staff checked the phone. This meant that prompt action was taken,

including a referral to the local authority and the police, to protect this young person from harm.

Young people rarely go missing from this home. There have been three missing-from-home incidents since the last inspection. When young people go missing staff act immediately by searching for young people and reporting them missing to the police and the local authority, as they recognise the vulnerability of the young people they are looking after. Staff spend time with young people after they have been missing, helping them to understand the risks inherent in going missing from home. The manager ensures that all missing-from-home episodes are evaluated to establish any trends and to monitor staff practice. It is not always clear from recording whether return interviews have been carried out.

Staff are proactive at equipping young people with the skills they need to identify risk and keep themselves safe. They undertake creative work with young people on child sexual exploitation, internet safety and stranger danger. They use a range of tools aimed at delivering this information in a way which young people engage with, and in line with each young person's level of understanding. This helps young people learn about keeping themselves safe. Young people were able to express during the inspection what they have learned from this work, and how it has helped them.

Staff demonstrate commitment to overcoming challenging behaviour. Staff are all trained in team-teach, which is the model they are expected to use to manage challenging behaviour. Each young person has a thorough behaviour management plan detailing the best ways to manage and prevent challenging behaviour. Young people are consulted about what they feel are the best strategies that will help them calm down and regain control of a situation. When restraint is carried out, this is done so as a last resort. Staff fill out clear and detailed restraint records, which enable the manager to ensure that young people's behaviour management plans have been followed and the restraint has been carried out in line with the legislative framework. The manager reviews and monitors patterns of physical intervention carefully, to inform practice.

Staff spend time with young people supporting them in areas of their life such as how to manage their emotions. They use a range of creative tools to help young people make sense of areas they are finding difficult, such as anger management. For example, for one young person staff have used a book, 'What to do when your temper flares'. Young people were positive about how this input from staff has helped them find strategies to manage their emotions, and they are able to reflect on the progress they have made due to the support they have received from staff in this area.

When they are concerned about a young person, staff working in the home are clear about, and follow, correct procedures. When staff are not satisfied with the response from the local authority, they challenge and escalate this when necessary, ensuring that the correct processes are followed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a permanent manager who is highly driven to ensure continuous improvement of the service, and to ensure that young people receive the best possible care. However, the manager has not obtained her level 5 qualification within the required timescales. She does have a clear plan in place to address this. This has not had an impact on the young people due to the exceptionally high level of care provided in the home.

The manager is supported by a very child-focused deputy manager who is passionate about her role and ensuring the best possible outcomes for young people. A new responsible individual has been appointed since the last inspection, who takes a very hands-on approach. As a whole, the leadership team creates a culture of high aspiration and positivity, which is reflected in the staff's commitment to improve the lives of the young people they are caring for.

The home is staffed by a stable, experienced and committed staff team which works collaboratively to ensure that young people feel valued and receive consistency in their care. Staff are ambitious for the young people they are looking after, and very much want the best for them. This is reflected in comments by young people who feel that staff genuinely care about them. One young person reported, 'The staff here are absolutely brilliant. I couldn't ask for more. They are brilliant at looking after children, and they do actually care.' Staff understand the aims and objectives in the home's statement of purpose, and ensure that the care they provide reflects this.

Staff like working in the home and feel well supported in their roles. They have good opportunities for training, and the impact of training in areas such as attachment theory was evident in the care young people receive and the practice shown during the inspection. Staff are very motivated in their practice and continually look for new research, tools and resources to use with young people to support them in all areas of their lives. This ensures that young people are supported in the best way possible to deal with their individual needs and vulnerabilities.

There has been one new admission to the home since the last inspection. While there were no known reasons as to why the new young person would not be a match to the other young person in the home, the impact assessment lacked evaluation and assessment of any potential impact on the existing group of young people, and there was a lack of recorded evidence of how the decision was made. The manager took effective action when it was identified that the new young person was not settling into the home, and that this was having an impact on the other young people. The transition out of the home occurred in a child-focused way, which reflected the young person's views.

The management team ensures that views expressed by young people have an impact on their care. For example, the young people living in the home have stated that they prefer it with just the two of them in the home. In recognition of this, and the fact that there is a period of transition on the horizon with one of the young people moving on in the new year, the management team has not admitted any new young people to the home and does not plan to do so until the new year. A social worker reported, 'They

have respected and understood [name's] birthday was at a difficult time of year, and worked in his best interests to ensure he was not moved during Christmas and New Year, which could have had a huge impact on [name's] overall well-being.'

Staff have established effective relationships with professionals such as social workers and the police, to ensure good outcomes for young people. Information is routinely shared with young people's social workers, and professionals are consistently positive about the level of communication from staff. A social worker reported, 'Staff communicate well with myself and keep me up to date either by phone or by email.' Staff are strong advocates for young people and robustly challenge local authorities when they feel that they are not acting in young people's interests, for example if they feel that strategy meetings are required.

The manager ensures that case files reflect young people's day-to-day lives. During the inspection some issues were identified with the recording of information. In particular, it had not been recorded whether return interviews have been carried out when young people go missing. Also, clear records have not been kept about any allegations made, including the outcomes, and any efforts made to follow this up. This has not had an impact on the young people as the correct processes were followed. The management team recognised the issues with recording, and have plans in place to rectify these issues. The manager makes good use of internal and external monitoring systems to monitor staff practice and young people's progress.

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, 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: SC386522

Provision sub-type: 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: David Carser

Registered manager: Susan Davies

Inspector

Sarah Billett, social care inspector

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