

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC386522
Inspector	Sharon Lloyd
Type of inspection	Full
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	Maureen Ann Stansfield
Date of last inspection	27/02/2014

Inspection date	30/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Children and young people benefit from a good standard of personalised, well-planned care that meets their needs. They make good progress in all areas of their development. Individually tailored placement plans, behaviour management plans and risk assessments are closely followed by the staff team. These promote individualised care and safe working practices.

The home provides a warm, nurturing environment in which most children and young people thrive. Children and young people contribute to their own plans and to decisions about daily life. They enjoy warm and supportive relationships with staff members and enjoy the good humour and banter that exists between staff and children and young people.

Good safeguarding procedures keep children and young people safe from harm. Children and young people rarely go missing and reduce their involvement in criminality. There is minimal use of restraint.

The home is led by an experienced, registered manager. Quality assurance systems highlight shortfalls in practice and the manager takes prompt action to address them. There are some shortfalls in record-keeping and in notifying HMCI of serious

incidents and changes to the home's statement of purpose. These have minimal impact on children and young people.

There are no male staff members at the home, and this means children and young people do not have the opportunity to form appropriate relationships with a good male role model. Access to services is not always prompt. In particular, some children have experienced delay in accessing the education and therapy services provided within the company. Staff are not fully confident in supporting young people to learn about sexual health and relationships. Parents are not always provided with written information about the home. These matters have been addressed through recommendations for good practice.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is a privately run children's home. The home provides long-term care and accommodation for three children who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2014	Interim	good progress
14/06/2013	Full	adequate
15/01/2013	Interim	good progress
14/08/2012	Full	inadequate

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
5 (2001)	notify HMCI of any revision to the statement of purpose within 28 days of any revision (Regulation 5(b))	18/10/2014
28 (2001)	ensure that in respect of each child who is accommodated in the children's home, a record is maintained in a permanent form which is signed and dated by the author of each written entry (Regulation 28(1)(c))	18/10/2014
30 (2001)	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in	18/10/2014

	respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30(1))	
29 (2001)	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure they are kept up to date. In particular, include children's addresses prior to being accommodated and on leaving the home in the admissions and discharge register. (Regulation 29(1))	18/10/2014

Recommendations

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

- make a copy of the Statement of Purpose available to the local authority and any parent or person with parental responsibility (NMS 13.1)
- support children and young people to develop positive and appropriate social and sexual relationships. In particular, support young people to understand their emerging sexuality. (NMS 12.1)
- ensure that children have prompt access to specialist services when they need these services. In particular, provide access to therapy where this has been agreed for a child (NMS 6.4)
- ensure that the staff group who are in day-to-day contact with children includes staff of both genders whenever possible to enable children to develop appropriate relationships with members of both genders (NMS 17.10)
- ensure that information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way that will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. In particular, take action where needed to ensure the quality and adequacy of record keeping. (NMS 22.1, 22.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people make good progress in developing self-esteem and confidence. They benefit from clear boundaries which help them to regulate their own behaviour and improve their social skills. They maintain and re-establish relationships with family through appropriate contact, facilitated and supervised where necessary. Children value the importance that staff place on this and it helps them to feel more cared for and settled in the home. Children and young people say this is a good home and the best thing about it is the staff, who are nice and look after them well. One said: 'It's a good place to live and I like it.'

Children and young people rarely go missing from the home. Those children and young people who have a history of frequently being missing go missing less often than in previous placements. As a result, they are much safer than in the past. Some children and young people with a history of anti-social behaviour, including drug misuse and offending, make good progress by significantly reducing their involvement with criminality and dependence on drugs. Their risk-taking behaviour reduces, and so they are safer. Other professionals are impressed with the way children and young people turn their lives around. For example, one said: 'The young person has turned around since moving there and is much more positive and seems happy.' Another said: 'This is the best he has been in over two years. High levels of going missing have dramatically reduced.'

Most children receive the emotional support they need through therapy organised by the provider. However, for some children there is a delay in accessing therapy despite referrals being made by the home in good time. Although they continue to make good progress, the emotional needs of these children are not met in the best possible way.

Children and young people make good progress in their education. Those who are well established in the home have excellent attendance and very good attainment. Those who have missed significant amounts of education before coming to the home receive the support they need to re-engage with education. For some young people the early signs are of a positive re-engagement with school and the promise of improving educational outcomes.

Children and young people lead mostly healthy lives. They benefit from good nutrition and access to any medical treatment or services that they need. They enjoy good health and they grow and develop well. Those who are reluctant to engage with health professionals benefit from good collaboration between the home and other agencies so that they have health assessments in a non-threatening way that suits their individual needs and wishes.

Quality of care

good

Children and young people respond well to the clear boundaries and nurturing environment in the home. They build trust with the staff, who listen to their views and help them to reach their stated goals. Children and young people enjoy the friendly banter, which helps them to relax and interact positively, making their wishes and feelings known. They recognise that staff try to support them in all aspects of their lives. The home develops good relationships with parents and this enables staff to work closely with parents to rebuild and strengthen relationships between children and their families.

Placement planning is child-focused and meets the individual needs of each child or young person. Staff know children and young people's plans, and good communication within the staff team enables consistent and well-planned care. They have consistently high aspirations for all the children and young people who live at the home. Achievements are celebrated and staff are genuinely delighted when children and young people take small steps towards improving their lives, such as when children and young people overcome their anxieties to attend school or achieve small measures of success.

Behaviour management plans are individually tailored to address the presenting challenges of each child and young person. These are supported by individualised risk assessments that guide staff in how to respond to particular risk-taking or anti-social behaviour.

Although children and young people are well supported to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development, their developing sexuality is not always recognised or well supported. Mindful of their age and level of understanding, some staff lack confidence in talking to some children and young people about good sexual relationships and in guiding children and young people to maintain good sexual health. This could put some children and young people at risk of inappropriate and unhealthy sexual relationships in the future.

Consultation with children and young people is good. They regularly have the opportunity to share their views and feelings through key worker sessions and group meetings. They take an active part in decision-making about their own lives and their day-to-day activities. The home's routines change to meet the individual needs of children and young people. For example, staff transport children and young people to and from school, appointments and contact visits as appropriate. They support engagement in a variety of activities in line with each child or young person's particular interests.

Children and young people are kept informed about developments in the home and are encouraged to contribute to these. They participate in developing their

personalised placement plans and understand that staff are supporting them to achieve improved outcomes in their lives. Records of consultations with young people are sometimes brief and do not always demonstrate the effective work that is taking place in the home. This does not impact on the quality of care.

There have been no complaints about the home but children and young people confirm they know how to make a complaint. They know the manager and deputy manager well and are comfortable in approaching them with a concern. They are consulted by the home's independent person as part of the regular quality assurance of the home and this ensures their voices are heard. They receive a copy of the children's guide which contains information about children's rights and accessing advocacy.

There are no male staff members in the home. This lack of a positive male role model does not support children and young people to learn to trust men and to interact with them appropriately and safely. The registered manager has begun to address this and plans are in place for a male member of staff to take up post very soon.

The home is suitably located. It is comfortable, clean and well-maintained. It provides a warm, homely environment where staff and children feel relaxed.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Children and young people say they are safe in the home. They recognise what staff do to protect them. They know and practice the fire safety procedures. The incidence of aggressive behaviour and damage is low.

Staff help children and young people to stay safe by introducing individually tailored behaviour management strategies and safe care practices. They consider what triggers may instigate unsafe behaviour and take action to reduce these or mitigate against them.

The incidence of children and young people going missing is minimal and has significantly reduced for some children and young people since their admission to the home. The home has looked after four children and young people since the last inspection. Of these, only one has been missing from care overnight, on one occasion. The home took prompt and effective action to secure the young person's safe and speedy return. Staff work with other agencies to promote the safety and welfare of missing children and young people. They welcome them back on their return. Other agencies recognise the home's central role in safeguarding children and young people.

The home has strong and proactive relationships with the police. This raises the profile of the police and helps children and young people to develop an

understanding of and respect for the law. The home takes action to prevent children and young people from being arrested where possible and where this is in their best interests. Staff support children and young people to attend court and to reduce their engagement in criminal activity. Restraint is rarely used in the home and only as a last resort to prevent serious harm to children and young people or others. Records of restraints demonstrate that physical intervention is carefully managed and no children and young people have been hurt during a restraint.

Careful vetting and selection of staff ensures as far as possible that children and young people are protected from unsuitable and unsafe people. There have been no allegations against staff and no child protection concerns since the last inspection. Staff are trained in child protection and know how to respond to an allegation or disclosure of abuse. They are confident they would be supported by the manager and provider to whistle-blow should they see any unsafe practice.

Leadership and management

adequate

The registered manager has been in post since August 2013. She has managed this home previously and is knowledgeable and experienced. She supports two other registered managers in the company as well as managing this home. She is suitably qualified to Diploma Level 5 in children's social care management. The registered manager keeps up to date with changes and developments in social care. This ensures she has the knowledge, skills and awareness to meet children and young people's needs.

A new deputy manager was appointed in June 2013. She is qualified to NVQ level 3 in caring for children and young people. She assists the registered manager and has taken on a key role in the home in recent months.

The staff team is experienced, well-qualified and provides consistent care to children and young people. Staff are well supervised and appropriately supported. Staff participate in a regular rolling programme of training and most staff have received extensive training in a range of areas that support them to care for the children and young people who live at the home.

The home is regularly visited by an independent person, who thoroughly assesses the operation of the home and the quality of care. He seeks the views of children and young people and provides a comprehensive report to the manager. Identified shortfalls are quickly addressed by the home. This demonstrates effective quality assurance that promotes improvement. No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

The manager monitors the operation of the home regularly. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has the capacity to drive improvement. There are some weaknesses in the recording of information in that some records are

not signed by the author and some lack detail and evaluation. There is evidence of this being addressed with the staff team. The statement of purpose has been recently updated but a copy has not been supplied to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI). Nor has a copy been shared with parents. This means that parents do not have full information about where their child is living.

The admissions and discharge register is not adequately maintained. This is because the children and young people's addresses prior to admission and on leaving are not always recorded. This does not impact on the current care of children and young people, but could impede a clear understanding of a child or young person's care journey should they wish to access their records in the future.

The arrangements for managing the home during the registered manager's absence are not strong. During this period, the home failed to provide a report for a young person's statutory review. This meant the review did not have full and up to date written information on which to base recommendations and decisions. The impact on the young person was minimal because they were able to make their views known and the staff made effective verbal contributions. In addition, the placing authority had been kept well-informed about the young person's progress through weekly summary reports.

The company's system for managing notifications is not effective. As a result, two recent serious incidents have not been notified to HMCI. This prevents the regulator from ensuring the home has taken all appropriate action to safeguard children and young people.

In most cases, the home works effectively with other agencies to promote good outcomes for children and young people. However, it does not always challenge other agencies robustly and so does not ensure that children and young people receive services quickly. For example, there was a small delay in a young person accessing education and a lengthy delay in a young person accessing therapy. The home was not tenacious and accepted the delays with little challenge. This means that children and young people do not have access to the services they need as quickly as possible.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.