

1247773

Registered provider: Keys Group Progressive Care & 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 five children who may have learning disabilities. Two children are accommodated under short-break arrangements and three children live at the home. It is run by a large, national private company.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 July 2017

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children with complex needs feel safe in the home and are able to make positive progress because of the high quality of care that they receive. Staff provide warm, supportive and aspirational care, which helps to develop relationships with children and with those who support them so that individuals can achieve in all aspects of their lives.
- Staff have a very good understanding of children's individual needs and risks presented by their vulnerabilities. Staff use their knowledge to provide high-quality support so that children are able to confidently develop new skills and enjoy new experiences to broaden their participation in society.
- Children are enabled to develop their communication skills at an appropriate pace. This reduces their frustration and helps them to manage their emotions better so that they are happier. Children's wishes and feelings are carefully gathered through their communication, as well as from staff's careful observations.
- Children are at the heart of practice in the home. Their wishes and views are reflected in their personal spaces and in the activities that they choose to take part in. This helps the children to achieve enriched experiences and access opportunities that add value to their lives. Their unique strengths and personalities are built on so that they continue to grow and develop.
- Education is well supported, so that children are able to make progress. The home is proactive in improving working relationships and understanding so that barriers to progress are overcome. Children's health needs are carefully addressed so that they improve, and children are encouraged to participate in activities to support their growth and development.
- Staff are supported by a strong manager and are collectively ambitious for children. Staff strive to improve their skills and knowledge to enhance children's lives. The home will challenge other professionals where they fall short in responding to meet children's needs appropriately and at a pace that children can comfortably manage.
- Parents and professionals report high levels of satisfaction in the care provided by the home, and how this helps to improve the quality of children's lives.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Children should only access age-appropriate activities, including computer games, so that they are not exposed to unsuitable material. Any unsuitable computer games should be removed on the child's admission to the home once staff identify they are in a child's possession. Children should be helped to understand why this is done to keep them safe.

- The home's manager must achieve an appropriate qualification in leadership and management that meets the regulations.
- Staff should receive training so that they are aware of, and are able to respond to, any signs that a child is vulnerable to being radicalised or engaging in extremist activities, and are able to protect them from such risks.
- All staff must receive practice-related supervision in line with company policy to ensure that their practice is formally evaluated. This is particularly important for members of staff during their probationary period.
- Reports completed by the independent person should fully evaluate and analyse practice in the home to support the manager's understanding of its strengths and weaknesses in safeguarding children and supporting their well-being.
- The home needs to continue to challenge and escalate when placing authorities do not provide relevant plans, to support effective care planning for children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

Inspection type

Inspection judgement

This is the first inspection since the home was re-registered under new ownership.

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
<p>The registered person must ensure that staff provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(viii))</p> <p>In particular, staff should not allow children access to computer games that are not appropriate for their age.</p>	18/08/2017
<p>A person may only manage a children’s home if, by the relevant date, they have attained—</p> <p>the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England). (Regulation 28(2)(c))</p>	18/08/2017
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))</p>	18/08/2017

Recommendations

- The home should continue to challenge when the placing authority does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child’s needs during their time in the home, particularly when relevant plans are not provided promptly. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’ page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- Any individual appointed as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home’s arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the home’s care. Reports should clearly evaluate practice in the home. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’ page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. In particular, staff should receive training to be able to recognise and respond to any concerns regarding radicalisation and extremism. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’ page 43, paragraph 9.12)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the first inspection since the home was re-registered under new ownership. It had previously been judged by Ofsted to be good.

Children with complex needs, autistic spectrum disorder and learning disabilities enjoy the experiences and opportunities provided by caring and responsive staff. The home provides high-quality, consistent care to children who live there, or stay under shared care or short-break arrangements. Children's lives are enriched and they develop in their ability to take part in everyday life, attend school and be healthy. Regardless of the complexity of their needs, aspirational staff support children to achieve their goals and fulfil their potential. Children make significant and continuous improvement across all aspects of their lives as a result.

Staff want children to have fun and take control over their daily lives and relationships. Staff understand the children's individual needs well, and carefully record small details such as their likes and dislikes, and what they can and cannot yet achieve independently. This means that staff are able to develop achievable plans from their insights, and enable children to successfully reach goals, such as accessing the cinema, using public transport, and completing tasks independently in the home. Children have been on holiday for the first time, attended cadets, and have achieved Duke of Edinburgh awards. Relationships between staff and children were observed to be warm and trusting, enabling children to feel safe and confident.

Children are helped to lead healthier lives and they are supported to attend health appointments. Careful observations and recording mean that staff are able to help medical professionals understand children's experiences so that they are able to support them. Procedures for the administration of medication are robust and are regularly audited to ensure that high standards are maintained. Staff are proactive in seeking medical advice to help children improve their mobility and physical strength, such as physiotherapy exercises. Dietary and toileting programmes help children to make progress in taking more control of their bodies. Children are helped to understand the impact of puberty, and external specialist agencies are sought to help children understand their sexual health needs. The manager seeks the advice of the company's clinical psychologist to gain insight into children's behaviours. This means that the team is able to provide consistent approaches to improve the children's social and emotional well-being outcomes. Plans are in place to sensitively and creatively support a child in his identity needs, so that he is better able to accept his sense of self and background. Children are treated with respect and dignity, and their cultural and identity needs are met.

Staff patiently support children in their individual communication systems, increasing the number of symbols that they use gradually, so that they are able to develop their visual vocabulary confidently. One social worker said that a child has made significant progress which 'would have been impossible without [the home's] support' and that the staff 'clearly want to see him reach his full potential while being realistic about timescales'.

The child is now able to make transitions better because staff use pictures to help him understand activities that are planned for his day.

Children have excellent attendance at school and make steady progress to achieve their personal educational targets. Key workers attend link meetings, personal education plan meetings, and reviews of children's education, health and care plans so that they can contribute to the holistic planning to support children's progress. Staff provide activities to support children's educational achievement in the home, helping them to develop their written and mathematics skills, as well as arts and crafts and games. One child will be starting college in September and has attended an interview there independently. He has completed year 11 at school and is enrolled on a national volunteering programme for the summer to continue to develop his confidence and social skills, and to broaden his social network further.

The home is extremely proactive in developing plans for children's futures and transitions to adulthood. One child has recently begun to see family members again and now wishes to return to his home area when he reaches 18. Staff are, therefore, integrating more trips and activities there, so that the child is able to familiarise himself and feel confident in his future surroundings when he moves. Planning is also underway for another child so that he is able to secure a permanent home when he becomes an adult.

The manager firmly believes that, as the world is not 'autism friendly', children should be helped, in line with their ability and understanding, to tolerate change. Small steps, such as a child being able to choose and tolerate colour in his bedroom, demonstrate how the home promotes such progress.

Contact is well supported so that this is safe and enjoyable for children. The home maintains excellent communication with families so that they are fully aware of achievements and challenges. This is particularly important where children have shared care arrangements, or visit the home for short breaks. Staff are sensitive to parents' own needs and concerns, and involve them in plans so that they feel fully part of their children's care. This promotes consistency and stability for children. Parents feel confident that their children are safe in the home and are positive about the care that staff provide. Parents report that communication from the home is very clear. One parent described the manager as 'a wonderful woman' and that she 'takes them like her own children' and 'does a brilliant job'. Professionals, such as social workers, are equally positive about the home and the progress that children make as a result of the care provided by staff.

Children are very much at the forefront of the staff's practice. Staff use their skills to observe children's preferences to complement their non-verbal communication, and to involve them as fully as possible. Children who communicate verbally have key-work sessions so that their views are heard and they contribute to the running of the home. Children are consulted through 'My views' and 'You asked, we did' exercises. One child reported being happy that he had been bought a white television which matches his Xbox. Children feel that they are important and their requests are taken seriously.

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

Safeguarding is highly prioritised for very vulnerable children who live at the home, or access it for short breaks. Children who communicate verbally say that they are able to talk to staff about any worries, and know how to complain. Other children were observed to seek reassurance from staff in the presence of the inspector and used their communication tools to make requests. They were happy and relaxed in their interactions, indicating a sense of safety, happiness and security in the home.

There are comprehensive risk assessments in place, which consider the individual needs of each child, including their disabilities, health needs, level of understanding and communication. These are reviewed regularly and in response to any emerging needs. Supervision levels of children are responsibly high, but staff enable those who are developing greater independence to take age-appropriate risks, as well as greater responsibility and control of their own lives. For example, one child makes his own appointments to see his doctor, and travels independently to the bank to withdraw money and go shopping. When he is away from the home, he has a mobile phone so that staff can contact him if he is away for longer than expected. Staff make appropriate checks with other professionals so that they are confident that, if the child wishes to meet with friends, they are appropriate and he is not at risk of being bullied. The child's social worker feels he has 'done brilliantly' in developing his independence skills and that, a year ago, he 'wouldn't have believed it' if he was told the child would be travelling on public transport independently to visit relatives. Other children are enabled to access the community with the support of staff, so that they are able to choose and purchase items for themselves. They are encouraged to complete tasks such as their laundry, or placing their own plates in the sink after meals. This enables children to safely develop new skills and build their confidence.

Children do not go missing from the home and, therefore, associated risks are minimised. However, staff are clear about the procedures that they should follow if children go missing and are aware of warning signs of exploitation, including online. Children who have access to the internet enter agreements, so that specific staff can check devices to keep them safe from online bullying or grooming. One child explained how he has his social media on particular settings to keep himself safe. However, a child who was recently admitted to the home was initially allowed to keep a computer game which was not age appropriate. Staff did not immediately remove it to safeguard a vulnerable child from a game involving violence, although they did so following the inspection and helped the child to understand why it was not suitable. A recommendation is also made that staff receive training to better develop their awareness of risks of extremism or radicalisation.

Staff provide support and protection that helps children to reduce their frustrations, which means that their self-harm reduces significantly from their starting points, and they are now far less likely to cause themselves injury. In particular, the work the home does to enhance children's ability to communicate has had an extremely positive impact. Positive praise is used readily to enable children to develop self-confidence and skills. Sensitive understanding of individual behaviours and expression, in line with behaviour management plans, means that aggressive behaviour reduces, as staff are able to respond proactively when children struggle with their emotions. This means that

incidents requiring the use of physical interventions also reduce, and staff will only use suitable methods to guide children away from situations where they might be harmed. Detailed records are made after any use of physical intervention, which clearly include observations of children afterwards to ensure their well-being if they are non-verbal, and include a detailed analysis of incidents.

Staff carefully record any injuries, and report any unexplained marks appropriately to other safeguarding professionals. They have encouraged better communication with schools so that injuries that have occurred elsewhere are clearly understood and information is shared. The home clearly challenges other professionals to ensure children's safety in the community, seeking support from advocates and requesting assessments from occupational therapists to make sure that children can access activities without risk of harm.

Detailed impact risk assessments are completed prior to any new admissions. This ensures that the manager is confident that the service offered is able to meet the needs of a child, and that any impact on children already living in the home is carefully managed. This procedure has been improved on to gather information from a number of sources, following a situation where a social worker had not fully informed the home of a child's needs. This meant that the child could not return to the home following an admission to hospital due to the impact of the child's level of distress on others. The high staffing ratio means that conflict between children does not occur; however, it was recognised that this child's needs could not be met safely.

There are prompt and decisive responses to any allegations, with clear communication with the designated officer, and outcomes are fully recorded with any actions taken. Staff are able to clearly describe procedures to be followed to ensure that children are safeguarded. There are positive links with other statutory professionals, including the police. This promotes effective safeguarding, and working together to keep children protected in all environments.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is effectively led by a strong and very experienced registered manager. She is committed and determined to provide children with a high-quality service that enhances their lives and continues to develop her skills and knowledge to enhance her own and staff's practice. However, due to changes in training providers as a result of the change in ownership of the home, the manager has not completed her level 5 qualification within timescales. This delay has not had a detrimental impact on children's well-being, but she and senior managers are aware of the shortfall, and there is a commitment to this being completed as soon as possible.

Staff report that the manager is highly supportive and encourages the staff's continued professional development so that they are able to support children with their individual and specific needs. Staff are either suitably qualified or are working towards gaining relevant childcare qualifications. Individuals have completed additional training, such as positive behaviour support, communication and autism awareness, to enhance their knowledge. Staff undertake training to meet specific health needs for children, such as epilepsy. The manager has a clear workforce development plan to ensure that staff

continue to develop their skills to underpin the progress made by children. As a result, children with complex needs are cared for by a very competent, enthusiastic and skilled team that has high aspirations for the children to fulfil their potential.

The person-centred planning for children is a positive characteristic of the service. Staff know children well, so that they encourage their progress, breaking goals down into achievable steps and creating strategies to help the children overcome barriers to success.

Staff help children to overcome frustrations by developing their communication skills. Staff share their knowledge and practice with other settings so that children receive consistent responses. Children's records are clearly written and provide a contemporary picture of their lives and experiences, and how they have developed in response to the care that they receive. The home takes a holistic approach to help children socialise, develop self-control, become more independent and lead happier lives. Children's progress is carefully tracked against their goals, however small, and their achievements are celebrated with rewards and certificates.

Professionals and parents talk positively about the impact staff have on children's development, safety and well-being. Key workers, in particular, are praised for their dedication and willingness to 'go above and beyond' to support children, as well as for the quality of their reports which allow children's voices to come through in their reviews. These reports contain photographs of the children's experiences and progress in their daily lives. The home engages with parents whose children access short breaks at the service, so that they are aware of the child's achievements during their stays. There is a sense of genuine pride in children's progress, and the manager maintains high expectations of staff to support the children to continue to develop.

The manager learns from previous experience. For example, she seeks information from children's wider networks of support, including schools, so that a holistic picture of the children's needs is identified where there are shortfalls in information provided by social workers. This has benefited the home's understanding of a child's needs who was admitted at short notice, with minimal relevant plans being provided by the placing authority. However, the home needs to continue to escalate and challenge placing authorities when plans are not provided as requested. The manager makes every effort to engage placing authorities so that children's needs are met, and challenges them robustly when there are unexpected changes in children's care plans. When one child was being moved at short notice, an advocate was engaged to act on the child's behalf to challenge the decision. Although the child did move, the home did all it could to ensure that his transition took place at a more suitable pace in line with his understanding. Any complaints are thoroughly investigated, and children are informed of the outcomes. Third party complaints are investigated and remedial action, such as addressing shortfalls in training, is taken.

Competent and thorough systems are in place to ensure that the manager understands the home's strengths and areas for development, and there is a focus on continual improvement to enhance children's lives. For example, the manager is looking to commission training in British sign language for staff, to explore this with a child for whom communication has been a challenge across all environments. The manager provides detailed oversight of records and ensures that staff have opportunities to reflect

in debriefs following any incidents so that they can improve their practice. Her oversight also provides direction for staff to prevent reoccurrence of situations which could have been avoided; for example, to allow a child to try to find their own solutions to challenges, before intervening.

Group supervision allows the team, as a whole, to discuss practice to ensure that staff members work consistently. Staff also receive individual reflective supervision, so that there is oversight of practice and any training needs or requests can be supported. However, not all staff have received this in accordance with the company's policy, which had been identified in reports by the independent visitor, but has yet to be addressed. The independent visitor's reports could further support the manager's understanding of the quality of care by providing better evaluation of practice.

Children live in a home environment that meets their individual needs, with plenty of room to enjoy activities and to relax quietly if they wish. Their bedrooms reflect their characters and meet their specific sensory needs and personal tastes. Repairs are now completed more promptly under the new ownership of the home in order to maintain the physical environment and, therefore, meet the previous recommendation.

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 difference 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 and 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.

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: 1247773

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Group Progressive Care & Education Limited

Registered provider address: Keys Attachment Centre, New Hall Hey Road,
Rossendale BB4 6HR

Responsible individual: Emma Beech

Registered manager: Ann Lorne

Inspector

Karen Willson, social care regulatory inspector

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