

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	11/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC013144
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Barnardo's
Registered person address	Barnardos, Head Office, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, ILFORD, Essex, IG6 1QG

Responsible individual	Mrs Julie Gibbard
Registered manager	Mrs Ruth Clacy
Inspector	Mrs Dancer

Inspection date		11/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement		N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection		None
This inspection		
	The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.		
	how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
	the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC013144

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Children have excellent relationships with staff who care deeply about them and view them as individuals with unique needs and wishes.
- Planning for short break stays is carried out with a great deal of thought to ensuring children's compatibility.
- Children's, often complex, health needs are catered for very well by staff who are trained and competent in a range of medical procedures.
- Children access highly stimulating activities inside and outside of the service that provide them with many opportunities to try new things, develop new skills and knowledge and have fun with staff and each other.
- Children's views are seen as paramount; their participation in all aspects of their day-to-day care and the development of the service is facilitated in a range of innovative ways.
- The leadership and management of this service are exceptionally strong and are forward thinking in the development of the service.
- The manager and the staff are reflective on their practice and continually learn and develop to provide children with the optimal quality of care.
- Staff are of a high calibre, very well trained and supported and show total dedication to ensuring that children benefit from having a short break stay in the home.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Fire precautions The registered person must take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, with specific reference to continuing to ensure that staff do not wedge open self-closing fire doors and gaining clarity about which children have been involved in evacuations and updating their personal evacuation plans according to any issues arising. (Regulation 25 1 a)	04/09/2015

Recommendations

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

Review of Quality of care.

- The review of the quality of care should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. (quality standard 15.4)

The Protection of Children

- ensure that all staff understand the arrangements in place for the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children (Quality Standard 9.18)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This residential short-break service caters for up to six children or young people at any one time. The service is provided by a national charity in partnership with a local authority and a primary care trust. Children and young people can therefore be provided with care and health packages. Most of the children and young people using the service have complex health needs, or are on the autistic spectrum and have associated challenging behaviour. The home is also registered with the Care Quality Commission as a domiciliary care agency that provides occasional support to families in the family home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
01/10/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
06/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
19/09/2013	CH - Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements	
	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
This is a highly flexible service and the manager and staff are dedicated to supporting children and their families to a very high standard. Staff get to know children and their needs extremely well. When planning introductions, which can be a particularly stressful time for parents and children, they work at the family and child's pace. A parent stated of their experience of the introduction process: 'Visits to the home have really reassured us, I am so happy for him to come.' Exceptionally good attention is paid when planning stays to ensure, as far as possible, children with compatible needs have their stay together. A social work manager stated in respect to a young person staff are, 'really good at making sure the other children in with him are suitable, from what we can see he has settled very well.' This young person does not like noise and busy environments and these needs are accommodated by him staying with a calmer group of children and arriving earlier than others to allow him to settle in. The service is also highly flexible in offering children additional stays. This can be due to a family crises or just when there is a vacant space. A social work manager said the service is, 'very flexible in offering extra stays to support families.' This also ensures that the service is used to capacity. Highly individualised care planning, of a good quality, ensures that complex and diverse needs are identified and catered for effectively. There is an interagency approach taken to care planning and parents are seen as the expert in their child; this is appreciated by parents who say they feel listened to. A social work manager stated, 'they are incredibly flexible, they have really listened to mum and are consistent with her in the delivery of his care.' There are excellent relationships between staff and children and each child has a member of staff allocated to work with them; this provides them with consistency of care across their stay. Staff are very caring, understand children's needs very well and provide them with an excellent quality of care; staff are sensitive and responsive to them and their individuality. These strong relationships help them to develop a positive self-view and the confidence to try new and interesting things. Staff spend lots of quality time with children and ensure they have fun during their short break. A parent said her child 'really enjoys coming.' They are expert at discreetly ensuring, even when high levels of personal care are required, that children's dignity is maintained. Mealtimes are well ordered and are periods in the day when children and staff come together as a group. These times in the day are a time for all to enjoy each other's company. A parent said, 'it has a family feel, inclusive and warm, they are really interested in him.' The service pays excellent attention to ensuring they gain children's views. They	

are consulted about their care and about the running of the home; children are supported to actively participate fully whatever their needs. For example, the use of a tablet has allowed children to feed their views into their review and the tablet and use of a collage has supported children to identify what qualities they would like to see in new staff being recruited. This is a totally child-centred service that seeks to establish and meet children's wishes and feelings about a variety of matters.

Children's education is supported because staff ensure that the school routine is maintained. There is good communication between the settings to ensure consistency over the 24 hour period. Very good attention is paid to ensuring that children develop their skills in many areas in their lives. Good targeted pieces of work are carried out to help children learn and develop their skills. These include learning about looking after their personal hygiene, developing better sleep patterns and learning the value of money through the use of a toy till. Excellent attention is paid to ensuring that children are integrated into the local and wider community through the impressive range of activities on offer to them. Barriers to children's participation are overcome to make sure that children have the same opportunities as their peers. A parent stated, 'they are really good at occupying her.'

Some children's health needs are very complex. These are very well catered for by staff who are trained in various medical procedures, and the nursing staff. Some children have high levels of nursing needs so a member of the nursing team is on duty to support the child and staff; care to children with lifelong conditions is of a very high standard. Arrangements for meeting children's complex medication needs are robust. A parent stated, 'they meet her health needs really well; very complex needs.' Another parent said how their child's sleep pattern 'has improved whilst at the home.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Social workers and parents confirmed that their children feel safe and are safe during their short break. One parent said when their child knows they are going for a stay that he, 'gets his bag ready to come.' Risks to children are well known and understood by staff who know them well and understand their non-verbal cues such as discreet gestures and eye movements. There is an individualised approach taken to risk assessment that allows children to experience new things in a measured and safe way. Behaviour management is effective. Staff have a good understanding about triggers for children to become distressed and understand changes in their demeanour. They are effective in avoiding incidents because they use de-escalation and diversion techniques very effectively. This means that issues do not get out of hand and situations are calmed quickly. For example, a young person was not comfortable being in a busy environment so he was led to the sitting room to spend some time alone and became calm and comfortable. There is minimal use of physical interventions and	

these tend to be very low level such as guiding children away from a situation.

Children do not go missing from this service but staff are fully aware of what to do in the unlikely event of this occurring. Likewise bullying is not an issue because of high supervision levels and the careful attention paid to considering compatibility issues when planning stays. Children who self-harm are catered for well because staff are alert to signs of discomfort and distress, which can lead to self-harming behaviours, and they make sure that these are addressed.

While the service has not got a history of the use of police the manager has recently made links to the local community police officers following an incident with local children. Staff now have guidance from them about what to do in a similar situation. Following this incident it is being arranged for a member of staff to go into the local school to talk to the children there so that they have a better understanding about what the service does and the needs of the children. The service is in a central position in the town and is appropriate to meet the needs of the children. Its location affords children lots of opportunities to take part in community activities.

The staff are trained in and alert to issues of child protection and safeguarding and understand their responsibilities. They know what action to take should they be concerned about the safety of a child. However, not all had a clear understanding about the safeguarding role of various officers within the local authority.

There is a robust staff recruitment process that ensures that staff working with the children are suitable people. Children have some involvement in staff recruitment as they have put forward their views about the sorts of qualities they would like new staff to have.

The service provides children with well-maintained and pleasant surroundings. There are lots of pictures of the children around the building and these provide them with positive messages about belonging and being valued. Health and safety issues are taken seriously. However, during the inspection a fire door was wedged open. The manager directed staff immediately about this practice. While children are involved in practice evacuations and all have personal evacuation plans the recording of this does not provide clarity about which children have not been involved in an evacuation and which children may have found the event distressing; this information could be usefully used to inform children's personal evacuation plans.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
The leadership and management of the service are exceptionally strong. The service is managed by an experienced manager, who is well-qualified; she has a degree in social work and a management qualification. She has been registered to manage this service since 2010. The manager has a high physical presence in the service and knows all of the children and their needs. The team manager for	

the service is also well qualified and experienced and together they are highly effective at managing the service and ensuring that children get the best from their short breaks.

The work of the service is underpinned by a clearly written statement of purpose that provides a good view about what people can expect and what the aims and objectives are. The service is operated in line with the statement. The manager has recently reviewed the guide provided to children and this is informative. She is seeking to develop a DVD version of a children's guide so that information about the service is accessible to more children.

The arrangements for monitoring the quality of care and for the development of the service are highly effective. Visits are carried out by a person independent from the service and provide an appropriate level of scrutiny of all aspects of the care. The manager's monitoring is robust but the reports of her monitoring activities do not reflect the areas for development over the next six months. There is, however, a clear and detailed development plan that is focused on driving improvements and children and their parents have a high level of input into this.

There have been no formal complaints since the last inspection but it is clear that this is a service that takes people's views seriously and that there is a commitment to learn from any issues raised. There has not been an opportunity for the manager to meet a recommendation made at the last inspection because there have been no issues that have required notification to Ofsted. However, following a recent incident the manager consulted with Ofsted to establish if it needed formal notification; this demonstrates that she now has a good understanding about this requirement.

While there have been some staff shortfalls due to sickness these have been very effectively managed so that children have had the stability and predictability of being cared for by staff they know. Staff turnover is low and staff are of a very high calibre. There is exceptionally good attention paid to ensuring that staff appointed are suitable, safe people who have a strong propensity to work with children with disabilities to improve their life chances. A parent said staff are 'lovely, caring and passionate'. Staff are well supported through regular supervision, appraisal, training and team meetings and managers are always available to offer extra support and guidance to them. They have a strong sense of their individual responsibility for knowing the children's needs and for their own professional development and this ensures that the quality of care remains up to date and of the highest quality. A social work team manager said, 'it is clear the staff really know the children.'

Overall case records are well maintained, securely stored and provide a good view about children's time in the home. Participation folders have been developed and these give an excellent view about what children have achieved and the positive impact their achievements have had on them.

There is excellent partnership working that ensures overall care packages for children and their families are delivered to a high standard. The manager and her staff 'go the extra mile in many cases' to ensure that families are well supported. They are exceptionally good at taking advice and guidance from local partners and agencies to ensure that the quality of care remains high. A social work manager described the, 'very close working relationship with the manager and deputy.' And went on to say, 'keyworkers are very proactive at communication; very fluid communication.' She highlighted how, 'social workers are always made to feel welcome at the home, they are very open to visits, and from visits social workers increase their understanding of the young person.' Likewise parents were complimentary of how the staff work with them, one said, 'they are very open, unlike most professionals they listen to parents' views and see parents as the expert on their own child. They listened to what would work and it has.' Another said, 'it is very much a joint venture.'

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 looked after children 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 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 who 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*.

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