

SC013144

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This short-break children's home cares for up to six children. The service is provided by a national charity in partnership with the local authority. The home's statement of purpose states that most of the children using the service have complex needs or an autism spectrum disorder and may have associated challenging behaviour.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2018.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 2 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2021

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	outstanding

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

Date of last inspection: 21 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/05/2019	Full	Good
13/06/2018	Full	Good
19/06/2017	Full	Good
09/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide children with positive experiences and individualised care. On referral to the home, staff work alongside qualified nurses to complete thorough assessments of children's needs. A strong introductory process means that the child's and parents' needs are recognised. Parents and social workers value that the service provides consistent routines, stability and enjoyment. A parent said, 'They are a life saver.'

Children benefit from an environment that is homely and nurturing. Even though the home is undergoing refurbishment, overall, the environment remains clean and well maintained to meet children's needs. Staff treat children with dignity and respect. Visits to the home are carefully planned and children are matched with peers with the same interests. This helps children to enjoy their visits and make friends.

Children are kept occupied and stimulated. The playroom has an exceptional supply of age-appropriate games and toys. Children draw, paint and take pride in their creativeness. Some children use the large garden space to complete projects such as spray-painting garden tools and planting vegetables with adult help. The garden provides access to a local park and play area, where children can meet and socialise with peers from the local community. This helps children to learn, play and develop socially.

Children's health needs are met. Qualified nurses and children's home staff work alongside each other to provide the required medical support to children. They are very attentive to children's progress in their health and well-being. Staff quickly share any concerns with medical professionals, parents and social workers. A social worker said, 'They [staff] respond to children's needs appropriately and are very involved in their care both in the home and when they return to their families.'

Staff support children to express their interests and views. For example, the children choose their bedrooms, contribute to food menus and pick activities they wish to participate in when they visit. Staff recognise that involvement of children and giving them choices allows them to have a sense of belonging, acceptance and a positive message of what they can achieve.

Staff communicate effectively with children when they stay. Staff are skilful in using different communication methods to obtain children's views and act on them. Staff listen to children and address any issues raised by them.

Children take part in varied activities during their visits. These include shopping, walks in the local area, cinema visits, boat trips and meals out, as well as indoor activities such as using the jacuzzi and baking. Parents and professionals are pleased with how children are kept stimulated and involved in many activities. A parent said,

'This is the first time he has made friends, and he is always happy when it's time to go there [the home] and meet peers.'

Staff and parents have a strong relationship. Parents feel listened to. Parents are highly confident in the care and support provided by staff. Staff keep parents well informed of their children's care and progress.

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

Children are safe. Qualified nurses train staff to meet the individual needs of the children. For example, staff have received specialised training to ensure they have skills and knowledge around supporting children with gastrostomy care. These skilled staff help children make significant progress.

Staff use personalised risk assessments and admission plans to identify risks to individual children effectively. Clear measures are in place to ensure the safety of all children. The good support and care provided by staff means that children become increasingly safe.

There is some use of closed-circuit television and radio monitors to monitor some children, depending on their specific health needs. Their use is agreed by parents, professionals and children before being put in place. However, there is no clarity on how often their use is reviewed, and this could have an impact on effective changes needed in the monitoring of children. This shortfall was raised at the previous inspection and remains unmet.

Children learn how to be safe online. Any internet use is monitored. Staff share any concerns with parents and other professionals. Staff work together with parents to identify and manage risks.

Qualified nurses oversee the safe administration of medication. Staff receive training in medication administration and must show they are competent in this area. Medication errors are rare. If these occur, thorough investigations take place and refresher training or reflective practice sessions are undertaken.

Staff manage behaviours well. They receive training in positive behaviour management and confidently use this to support children. Staff rarely use physical intervention. Staff use good techniques to de-escalate any potential incidents, with the manager's oversight to ensure that this is completed safely. The use of consistent boundaries, responding to verbal and non-verbal cues and the positive range of activities on offer mean that children feel safe and secure. A previous requirement relating to the oversight of incidents is met.

The environment where children stay is generally safe. Food hygiene is compromised as some cooked food and opened packets of food are not clearly labelled when stored in the fridge. This could be harmful to a child's health. Additionally, the fire risk assessment identified that all fire doors should be fitted

with updated locking systems. One fire door was found to have the outdated locking system still in place. This compromises the fire safety of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager returned to work at this children's home in April 2021 after being seconded to manage another children's home. Leaders and managers ensure high standards of individualised care are provided to all children who use the home. They have high expectations for what all children can achieve and have put processes in place to address any shortfalls. When children do not achieve individualised targets, the manager ensures that this is reviewed and more achievable targets are identified. Parents and professionals are involved in this goal-setting process. This leads to children regularly feeling a sense of achievement.

Since the previous inspection, monitoring systems have been used more effectively. Leaders and managers maintain outstanding levels of monitoring and oversight of systems. Children's progress is tracked and reviewed effectively. All documents and plans, including those involving children's health, are reviewed by leaders at regular and frequent intervals. Risk assessments and support plans are reviewed as required. This results in these assessments being live documents where changing risks are quickly and effectively identified, with control measures put in place. This provides the manager with an effective oversight of practice and the progress made by children.

Leaders and managers ensure training programmes specific to the individual needs of children are made available to staff. Staff say that they value the range of training opportunities open to them. Nurses lead training sessions which cover the health needs of the children. They also share with staff any updates they receive from the healthcare sector and other medical professionals. This enhances staff's medical understanding and helps them to meet children's health needs.

Staff receive regular supervision, which reflects on the care of children and staff development. Staff also benefit from additional clinical group supervision. The nursing team is also well supported. However, the absence of a stable senior management team has caused instability to the service and affected the supervision provided to the registered manager. This means the manager does not receive regular guidance and support for the role.

Leaders and managers know the strengths of the home well and identify and address effectively areas for development. The manager identified an area of weakness in the movement of staff between services during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, control measures and regular support were put in place, which reduced the spread of infection and maintained a positive staff morale.

Leaders and managers have excellent relationships with external professionals, which ensures the best possible support and outcomes for children. They meet monthly with the local authority senior managers and the children's mental health service to discuss the needs of each child. Staff also attend meetings with schools

and use education plans to set achievable targets aimed at improving children's learning outcomes.

The manager promotes equality, diversity and inclusion exceptionally well. There is a culture of openness and respect, where the manager and all individuals are approachable and friendly. The manager promotes children's choices. Value is given to every child's opinion and this ensures that they feel included.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) Specifically, ensure that food that is opened is labelled. Also, ensure that the home is well maintained and worn areas are replaced or refurbished promptly.	30 November 2021
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to the home— paragraph (1) does not apply; and the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(a)(b))	30 November 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	30 November 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that regular discussions about the use of surveillance or restrictive measures are undertaken. The professionals' views should inform the staff's decisions about the appropriateness of the measures used. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16). This recommendation was made at the last inspection and is restated.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC013144

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Registered provider address: Barnardo's, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford IG6 1QG

Responsible individual: Michelle Kukielka

Registered manager: Julie Gibbard

Inspector

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector

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