

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	7 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC025940
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Barnardo's
Registered provider address	Barnardos, Head Office, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG

Responsible individual	Suzanne Turner-Jones
Registered manager	Lucellta Wallace-Esnard
Inspector	Lee Kirwin

Inspection date	7 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC025940

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make exceptional progress in all areas. Staff help them to overcome barriers to learning and support them to improve school attendance.
- Staff provide personalised care. This is based on understanding of what each young person finds helpful and on expert advice from health professionals.
- Staff use evidence-based learning from social pedagogy approaches. This creates a learning culture where staff provide thoughtful, positive interventions to help young people to experience success.
- The service is particularly good at working closely with families. This allows young people to maintain positive family relationships and, in some cases, to return home successfully.
- The registered manager is an excellent role model. She is an expert practitioner and an inspirational leader. She provides clear support and direction to staff. She is an excellent administrator and has oversight of all aspects of practice in the home.
- Staff help young people to improve their behaviour by using positive strategies such as praise and rewards. This has a positive impact on their lives as it helps them to build and maintain relationships. It also means that they are able to engage and achieve in education.
- Young people benefit from nurturing relationships with staff who provide genuine love and care. This gives them a secure base from which to make sense of their world and to engage with support.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to making sure that health information informs risk assessment and that staff assess levels of risk, the registered person must ensure (2)(a) that staff (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.	15 July 2016

Recommendations

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

- Staff skills for safeguarding should include being able to identify signs that children may be at risk and to support children in strategies to reduce any risk. This specifically relates to the need for staff training in relation to risks of radicalisation ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.10).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charitable organisation (Barnardo's). It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children with learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12 January 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18 May 2015	Full	Good
16 March 2015	Interim	Not judged
21 January 2015	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The home feels like a family home. It is furnished to a high standard and decorated in a way that creates a warm, comfortable environment. Young people enjoy living in the home. One young person told me how much she liked the staff and her room and loved the garden. Another young person had been reluctant to let her friends know that she was living in a children's home, but now invites her school friends to visit. Parents feel welcome in the home. They regularly visit and spend time with their children there. One parent commented that she was anxious when she first visited, but staff were very welcoming and put her at ease. She felt that staff consult her in all decisions relating to the care of her child and do not 'try to take over' the parenting role. This enables young people to live in the home, yet not feel isolated from family life. They can benefit from all of the advantages of being part of a family and get help to overcome difficulties in order to improve family relationships. For one young person, this meant that he could return home to live with his mother. For all young people, it means that they can continue to build and maintain positive relationships with their families. The staff team has completed substantial, accredited training in social pedagogy approaches to care. This promotes a learning culture in the home where staff, use everyday activities as an opportunity to teach and learn alongside young people. This is an extremely effective method of helping young people to make progress. It means that they can learn to take small steps with a hand to hold, until they develop the confidence and skills to become more independent. Staff have used this approach to good effect. One young person was withdrawn and refused to attend school. Staff identified small steps to promote a structured routine initially, and to help her spend more time socialising. She made a gradual return to education and now attends every day. She also spends less time in her room and is able to go out into the community independently to socialise with friends. Young people are encouraged to contribute to the daily routines and tasks around the home. They help with household chores and enjoy cooking some meals. Young people have an individualised care plan that they are encouraged to contribute to. Staff work hard to make sure that the lived experiences of young people are central to influencing the way that they are cared for. This is underpinned by a strong value base that promotes the rights of young people. As a result of this approach, one young person was able to work towards a shared goal of 'taking control of her life'. Staff supported her to learn strategies to influence her environment in a positive way and to reduce behaviours that were having a	

negative impact on her life at home, and in school.

Staff help young people to explore how they see themselves and how they feel that others perceive them. For one young person, this was helpful for her to explore her sense of self in relation to being of mixed heritage. Another young person was able to talk about his feelings in relation to 'having learning difficulties' and he did not attend some groups and clubs because he perceived this in a negative way. The staff team celebrates diversity and provides a range of opportunities and supports to ensure that the cultural, spiritual and personal needs of young people are met. Young people maintain close contact with their families, and this enables them to 'keep in touch with their roots'.

Staff enjoy spending time with young people. They talk about them with conviction and compassion. When young people succeed, staff are genuinely proud of their achievements. When young people are struggling, staff are resilient and reflective. They hold the young person in mind and are able to adjust their approach when necessary. They maintain firm boundaries and push young people to achieve their potential, but do so in a way that is both nurturing and considerate. This helps young people to feel valued. They enjoy success and learn from mistakes.

Staff use a variety of tools to undertake direct work to enable young people to make sense of their world. This provides a safe space in which they can talk about their worries, hopes and fears. Young people make good use of these sessions to let staff know how they are feeling and what matters most to them. By asking for help from staff that they trust, they sometimes avoid feeling overwhelmed. This reduces the risk of them using negative behaviour as a coping strategy.

Young people are healthy. They have a balanced diet and participate in a range of activities that are good for both their physical and emotional well-being. Staff make sure that young people attend medical appointments and that they receive the help that they need to manage health issues. They advocate strongly to make sure that young people receive the best treatment. This was helpful for one young person who refused to take medication. Staff were able to support her and to work with health professionals to reduce the amount of medication prescribed. She now takes her medication regularly and is engaging with health services.

Staff use expert help and guidance to inform their interventions. They understand how professional diagnosis in relation to mental health may have an impact on how young people experience the world around them. This helps them to provide support to young people in a way that helps them to reach their potential. It also means that staff avoid doing things that may be counter-productive and prevent young people from making progress. For example, a young person became angry and resistant when being repeatedly asked to hurry up when getting up for school. She responded better to visual prompts, so staff bought her a 10-minute sand timer. This helps her to understand how long she has to get ready and means that she is able to be more independent.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The provider undertakes a thorough assessment of their needs before admitting young people to the home. It takes account of the impact on the existing group of residents and plans each admission carefully. The views of young people and their families are also considered as part of the referral process. This means that most young people come into the home as a positive choice. They join a stable group of young people and the staff team has the space, knowledge and skills to help new admissions to settle and to make progress. The staff team is stable and provides a consistent experience of care for young people. It understands the vulnerabilities for each young person and has clear strategies in place to manage and reduce risks. Risk assessment records do not always contain sufficient information to ensure that all risks are taken into account. This does not have an impact on the well-being or safety of young people because, in practice, staff know them well and provide excellent support and supervision. Young people seldom go missing. Staff assess the vulnerabilities of each young person in the event that their whereabouts are unknown. They have strategies in place to reduce the likelihood of them going missing. If a young person does go missing, staff know how to respond and take prompt action to protect them. Staff are trained in relevant areas of child protection training, including risks relating to children who may be vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. They have not yet undertaken training in relation to risks that young people may be exposed to in relation to radicalisation. The registered manager has undertaken this training and has sufficient oversight to guide staff if concerns arise. Young people are allowed to take risks that are appropriate to their age and their capacity to understand dangers. Staff help them to learn the skills that they need to keep safe in the community. They encourage them to take small steps in order to demonstrate that they can stay safe. This promotes independence and helps to avoid interventions that are overly restrictive. Staff work closely with families to make sure that they know whom young people are spending time with. They get to know their friends and this reduces the risk that young people will associate with peers who may be a negative influence or put them at risk. Staff are vigilant and alive to risks presented by the internet and social media. They restrict access to inappropriate websites and have a cut-off time for internet access. This encourages more social interaction, promotes healthy routines and reduces the time that young people have unsupervised access to the internet. Staff are extremely skilled at managing challenging behaviour and seldom use any	

kind of physical restraint. They use positive reinforcement such as rewards and praise, to encourage positive behaviours. Young people do not engage in anti-social behaviours or commit crimes.

The registered manager has excellent oversight of practice in the home. She knows the young people well and is visible within the service. Young people know how to raise concerns and, when they do so, they are taken seriously. The manager takes prompt action to deal with any concerns and complaints. She shares information about concerns with the placing authority and ensures that young people are informed of the outcome. The home uses mediation to help to resolve conflicts in the home. This ensures that young people are safe from bullying and are supported to address any low-level complaints involving staff.

The area risk assessment for the home demonstrates that it is a safe location for young people to live. Practice in relation to health and safety in the home is good. Risk assessments in relation to the premises are regularly reviewed, accidents are properly investigated and fire safety practice is good. This ensures a safe environment for staff and young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is an excellent role model for the service. She has a strong ethical value base that promotes the rights and welfare of young people. She is a highly skilled practitioner with excellent knowledge of evidence-based interventions. She is able to use this knowledge to advocate effectively within the professional network to ensure that the experiences of young people remain at the heart of care planning. Staff appreciate the support and direction provided by the registered manager. They feel that she is approachable and will always listen to their concerns. Staff have regular supervision in order to reflect on practice, keep on task and focus on learning and development needs. The staff work well as a team. They are mutually supportive and contribute to regular team meetings. Some team sessions are facilitated by a clinical psychologist. This helps the team to reflect on practice, explore the emotional impact of the work and develop informed strategies to help young people to make progress. The registered manager provides a clear direction and sense of purpose to the staff team. She is 'hands on' when this is needed, but is also able to step back and	

allow staff to use their individual talents and creativity to work with young people. This models the social pedagogy methods of practice and creates a learning culture where people feel valued and able to contribute.

The administration of the home is excellent. Written records are accurate and well maintained. The registered manager is currently managing two homes and has additional service manager responsibilities within the organisation. She is well supported by the responsible individual, who provides regular supervision and support. The registered manager recognises that she has a heavy work load and has an effective transition plan in place to train a new manager to take over the role.

The service demonstrates continuous improvement. The manager has addressed the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. This includes improving recording in relation to physical restraints and updating the home's statement of purpose to clarify the admissions policy. She has good oversight of practice in the home and regularly undertakes a review of the quality of care provided to young people.

She has a clear vision to improve further the outcomes for all young people who come to the home. This is supported by the organisation, which has made a commitment to provide significant investment. It is seeking to create residential care provision that is a beacon of excellence and transforms the lives of young people in care. This investment enables the home to work with reduced occupancy and allows the registered manager and staff team time and space to build on their success.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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 whom 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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