

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	12/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC025940
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Barnardo's
Registered provider address	Barnardo's, Barnardo House, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG

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

Inspection date	12 January 2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Managers and staff continue to provide a good standard of care for the young people living there. There are a number of young people who use the service for short breaks at weekends and during the school holidays. The provider plans these breaks to minimise the disruption to young people staying longer term. If required, the home also provides extra staffing at weekends to ensure that young people receive the individual attention that they need. This ensures that all young people staying at the home have a positive experience and are safe. The home's statement of purpose does not accurately describe the practice in relation to managing long-term placements alongside short-break provision. This needs to be amended. All young people are actively engaged in education and are making progress. Staff work effectively in partnership with education providers. They advocate for young people and provide constructive challenge when necessary. In one example, they made sure that issues in relation to bullying at school were addressed. This means that young people receive the help and support that they need to stay safe and succeed in education. Staff are resilient when faced with challenging behaviour. They use positive strategies to help young people to manage their feelings and self-regulate their behaviours. The manager of the home regularly reviews care plans in response to incidents of concern. If it is apparent that they cannot meet the needs of a young person, they work with the local authority to ensure that the placement ends in a planned way. Most young people leaving the home do so in a positive way and achieve positive outcomes. One young person was able to move back to their family full time, and another moved successfully to a residential school. Staff communicate effectively with parents and support young people to have contact with their families. One parent described the care that the staff provide to her daughter as 'absolutely fantastic'. She felt that staff go 'above and beyond what they have to do'. She described how staff had helped her with strategies to support her daughter to manage her behaviour and reduce conflict in the family home.	

Young people value the relationships that they have with staff and enjoy living at the home. One young person said, 'I can talk to staff; they are like a second family.' She went on to describe how she had fun with staff and that she enjoyed the food.

Children are safe at the home. Staff identify areas of vulnerability for each child and intervene to reduce the risk of harm effectively. They work in partnership with the professional network to develop safety plans when young people are at risk of harm. Young people seldom go missing and, if they do, staff take prompt action to locate them and to ensure their safe return. Staff have a proportionate response to managing risk and allow young people to take acceptable risks in order to develop skills for independence.

Each young person has a care plan that sets out how best to support them and keep them safe. Staff consult with young people to ensure that these plans are both relevant to them and helpful. Some care plans do not identify all key areas. In one example, a young person is struggling to be up for school on time, yet the care plan does not identify how he may be supported to settle earlier at night and to develop more healthy routines.

Young people are encouraged to share their views and know how to raise concerns. Staff listen to young people and are responsive when young people are unhappy or have ideas to improve the service. Staff are aware that some young people who may be on the autistic spectrum may have heightened sensitivities to their environment. They make adjustments when this is practical. They also take time to support young people to cope with day-to-day issues that may be presenting a challenge to them.

The physical environment is homely and generally well maintained. Young people are encouraged to take part in tasks around the home, such as clearing the table and cooking meals. This helps to promote a sense of belonging and develops important skills for independence.

Young people are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices. Staff support them to attend medical appointments and provide care that is consistent with medical advice. The provider ensures that staff receive specialist training to meet more complex health needs. One young person has made some progress in taking responsibility for managing his medical condition. Staff are aware that further progress is necessary to prevent immediate and long-term health problems. They closely monitor his condition and provide incentives to reward success. It is not clear how the manager of the home is systematically monitoring practice in this area. This runs the risk that errors may occur and opportunities to improve the health management plan may be missed.

The manager of the home has addressed the shortfalls identified during the last full inspection. All staff have undertaken training to identify and act on any signs that

young people may be at risk of radicalisation. She has also amended and improved the risk assessments to make sure that risks related to health concerns are highlighted and that support is in place to reduce them. She makes good use of feedback from independent visitors and uses this to improve the service. She undertakes regular monitoring of the quality of care at the home. She takes prompt and effective remedial action to address shortfalls. Staff appreciate the support that they have from the management and work effectively as a team. One agency member of staff reported that he feels valued within the team and attends regular team meetings, and that the manager regularly checks in with him to offer support. This indicates that the home has a positive culture in which staff feel valued, consulted and supported.

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
07/06/2016	Full	Good
12/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/05/2015	Full	Good
16/03/2015	Interim	Not judged

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

Recommendations

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

- The information set out in the statement of purpose is an essential part of the process of agreement between the registered person and placing authority that a placement in that home is the right one for that child, and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. The provider should amend the statement of purpose to specify how the home will meet the needs of those young people on short breaks. It should also specify how the service manages the impact of short breaks on young people staying long term and vice versa. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.6)
- The registered person should oversee the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with: each child; the home's staff; each child's family/carers where appropriate; and professionals involved in the care or protection of each child including their social worker and relevant health professionals. To meet this, the provider must ensure that there are robust and systematic measures in place to monitor complex health management plans. Practice would be strengthened further if specialist health professionals were involved in a level of scrutiny and monitoring of recording and assessment of practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)
- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home, and for them to gain skills and experience that enable them to support each child actively to achieve their potential. To ensure that staff understand and can meet each child's needs, in line with their responsibilities, the registered person themselves will need to have a high level of understanding of the needs of the children in their care. Staff must take steps to identify barriers to success and identify key areas for direct work in order to help young people to take small steps to achieve progress. This specifically relates to the example outlined in the report of a young person getting up late for school, but practice would be improved if all care plans identified small, achievable goals and interventions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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