

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	18/05/2015
Unique reference number	SC025940
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Barnardo's
Registered person address	Barnardo's, Head Office, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, ILFORD, Essex, IG6 1QG

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

Inspection date	18/05/2015
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	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:

- The registered manager and staff provide a high quality, homely environment that is designed to help young people feel comfortable and safe. One young person describes the care he receives as “five star treatment”.
- Young people access specialist support to improve their emotional wellbeing and staff make use of expert advice to ensure that they understand individual needs. Positive strategies are used to improve behaviour and staff develop warm, nurturing relationships with young people. This helps them learn from mistakes and feel safe.
- Children and young people are supported by structured routines that take into account their interests and abilities. They are encouraged to engage with routines independently and success is rewarded. Young people appreciate this and experience it as being helpful.
- Staff work effectively in partnership with parents, this enables young people to maintain family contact and ensures that parents are able to play an active role in caring for their children. Parents feel staff are very patient and work hard to understand the needs of children.
- The leadership and management of the home communicate a clear vision which is ambitious in its aims to provide exceptional outcomes for young people. Significant resources are in place to ensure staff receive comprehensive training to deliver a social pedagogy model of care. This is a child centred framework which encourages staff to spend time with children and use thoughtful approaches to help them learn.
- The registered manager leads by example to provide a creative learning culture in the staff team. Young people are cared for by a skilled, experienced and stable staff team; who are well supported by managers.

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.

None

Recommendations

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

- Pre incident risk assessments to be completed to identify steps to be taken in the event of children going missing from the home. (The Guide, Page 45, paragraph 9.24)
- When waking night staff are not used, contingency plans should be in place which include an assessment of risk for young people placed in the home, of the impact of reduced supervision. These plans should be shared with the placing authority and parents. (The Guide, Page 54, paragraph 10.18)
- The registered manager to produce child protection guidance, policies and procedures that are specific to the home and therefore more accessible to staff. (The Guide Page 44, paragraph 9.21).

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The home provides long term care and accommodation for up to 6 children with learning difficulties.
- The home is owned and managed by Dr Bernardo's, who are a charitable trust.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/04/2015	CH - Interim	
16/03/2015	CH - Interim	Not judged
21/01/2015	CH - Interim	Not judged
14/01/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
The home records detailed care plans for young people which take into account their journey into care. Staff work alongside parents and other professionals to understand the needs of young people. They use this understanding to help children work towards achievable goals and develop life skills to promote independence. Young people are supported to undertake tasks in the home, such as tidying up, this teaches them important practical skills as well as helping them contribute to creating a homely feel. One young person said that; <i>'the home is the best because it's a home from home'</i>. Young people are supported to share their views and concerns with staff. There is a box for them to make suggestions and share ideas; and also an independent person available for young people to talk to if they feel unable to resolve issues by talking to staff. The home presents information on how to raise concerns in a number of different ways so that young people with a range of communication needs, can access information. Staff provide structured routines and this is helpful to ensure young people are well prepared for school. Each young person has a reward chart to encourage them to establish positive routines. One young person said he found this helpful to prompt him to get himself washed, dressed and ready for school on time. A parent said that she felt that staff had supported her child to improve his attendance and attitude to learning. Day-to-day care is planned to ensure young people can take part in activities that they enjoy and this also ensures that they receive dedicated one to one time with staff. Routines are appropriately flexible to enable them to have choice about what they want to do, how they want to do it; and who they want to spend time with. Young people attend regular health appointments. If specialist help is needed, staff advocate for young people to ensure that this is obtained without delay. They ensure that young people take medication as prescribed by medical practitioners and also monitor for any side effects that may impact on health. A parent reported that a young person improved their diet as a result of staff working with her to provide foods that he was used to eating at home. The staff team consult with specialists in child and adolescent mental health. This helps ensure that the care provided promotes the emotional wellbeing of young people and is based upon a sound understanding of any diagnosed learning difficulties or impairments.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Comprehensive risk assessments and behaviour management plans identify areas where individual young people need particular support, and identify strategies to reduce risks. There are some gaps in the recording of risk and risk management plans for individual young people. There is no strategy on record to identify steps that need to be taken in the event a young person absconds. There is no record of a risk assessment to inform how staff ensure young people are safely supervised when no waking night staff are on duty. These shortfalls relate to recording, rather than practice in the home. Staff are knowledgeable, well trained and understand procedures in relation to young people going missing from care, risks of sexual exploitation and steps to take in the event of safeguarding concerns. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home. The manager and staff are able to demonstrate good professional judgement in relation to levels of supervision at night. Recording of risk assessments needs to improve to ensure children remain safe but there has been no impact on the safety of young people living in the home. Staff in the home have a good insight into the trauma often experienced when young people come into care in crisis as a result of family and placement breakdowns. They are able to understand how this may impact on presenting behaviour and how these difficulties can present an even bigger challenge for young people with learning impairments. Staff help young people to settle in to the home and build positive relationships. They demonstrate resilience when faced with challenging behaviour. Staff de-escalate incidents effectively by talking to young people, helping them choose more positive ways of expressing their feelings, and giving them time to talk and reflect afterwards. Physical interventions are rarely used and are kept to the minimum level of intervention necessary to manage situations safely. This benefits young people as they are helped to significantly reduce incidents of challenging behaviour and maintain positive relationships through difficult periods. A young person reported that all of the staff 'are nice' and that he had two members of staff who he felt particularly close to. A parent described how staff had shown a lot of patience to help manage difficult behaviour and understand the young person's needs in order to help him. She felt that staff; and the manager in particular, had 'stuck their neck out' to help her son. She described how her son's behaviour had improved significantly in a relatively short space of time.	

Staff in the home are well trained in how to safeguard young people and work effectively to protect them from harm. Young people feel safe to raise concerns and staff ensure that any serious concerns are investigated in line with child protection procedures. Where these concerns do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention by the Local Authority, the organization has resources available to conduct their own independent investigation.

Robust recruitment procedures ensure that the staff employed in the home are properly vetted and are suitable to work with children. All of the staff in the home are suitably experienced and qualified for their role. The manager provides effective supervision that gives staff time to reflect individually; and as a team, on the impact of managing challenging behaviour. This promotes a healthy culture where they feel listened to, and have a safe space to explore the emotional impact of the work on their own wellbeing.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
. The service achieves significant improvement for young people in all areas of development. The manager provides an excellent role model and is able to appreciate staff and nurture their development in a way that is consistent with the values that underpin the care practices in the home as outlined in the statement of purpose. A stable and experienced staff team is in place and this helps provide a confident, consistent experience of care for young people living in the home. Staff benefit from regular supervision, annual appraisals and individual learning and development plans. There is a clear structure in place to ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities. They feel supported in their role and are able to approach the manager to raise any concerns or seek advice. The manager is very experienced and works effectively in partnership with other agencies. She is able to provide constructive challenge in order to advocate for young people within the professional network. She is supported by an organization that provides support and oversight, but allows her the autonomy and authority to make key decisions such as the suitability of referrals. The administration of the home is good. Records, policies and procedures are up to date, fit for purpose and effectively monitored. Some of the policies in the home	

are produced by the organization, rather than the registered manager. These policies comply with legislation and guidance, but are not specific to the home and would benefit from revision to make them more easily accessible to staff.

Care planning in the home is good. Young people arrive with good information about their history and needs. Admissions are well planned and there are clear expectations about the information and support required from the placing authority when young people are admitted. New residents are introduced to the home in a planned way and parents are supported to be fully involved where appropriate. The manager ensures that the staff work positively with parents and she is able to negotiate effectively where there are tensions between respecting the views of parents and those of young people.

The care plans, risk assessments and behaviour management documents make use of existing assessments and information. They inform interventions and outline strategies that staff should employ to achieve the aims and objectives outlined in the relevant plans. Care plans accurately reflect the direct work with children.

The manager regularly monitors all aspect of the service, she is able to identify areas of weakness and take remedial action to address any areas of concerns. She is leading on delivery of an aspirational vision to raise standards of care and improve the life chances of young people living in the home. This involves a new model of care based on learning from social pedagogy approaches. The impact of this work is evident in the high standard of refurbishment of the home and the detailed thought that contributed to providing a 'home from home' for young people.

The staff team are undertaking substantial training in social pedagogy approaches and are highly motivated to make changes. They are beginning to put learning from this training into practice by learning new skills to undertake creative activities with young people and putting more thought into planning direct work.

The manager plans to leave her post in the near future to take up a service manager position in the organization. There is a new interim manager in post who is currently undertaking induction with the intent to apply to be the registered manager. The current registered manager will become the line manager and remain actively involved as part of the management structure of the service. There are robust arrangements in place to ensure that the new manager is supported to take on the role with minimum disruption to the service.

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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