

SC025940

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children who have learning disabilities. They offer some short breaks and respite placements, as well as longer-term placements.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 July 2017

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 12 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people enjoy staying in the home and make good progress.
- Staff are attentive to the young people.

- Staff are thoughtful about the quality of care that they provide and how young people experience care.
- Staff take a nurturing approach to supporting young people. They display emotional warmth and genuine care.
- Parents report that staff provide excellent care for their children. They feel that their children are safe and well looked after.
- Social workers are overwhelmingly positive about the standards of care provided to young people. They say that staff are welcoming, responsive and demonstrate good insight into the needs of young people.
- The registered manager of the home is a positive role model and leads staff effectively. She expects high standards of staff practice and has good oversight of the quality of care provided to young people.
- The registered manager is accessible and available to staff and young people. They appreciate this and value her guidance and support.
- Staff undertake in-depth, specialist training to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the specific needs of the young people.
- Staff encourage and support young people to achieve their potential, develop their skills and become more independent.
- Young people enjoy living in an environment which is spacious, homely and safe.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Care planning records lack consistency.
- Risk assessments are not always updated to reflect identified risks.
- Staff fail to record accurately the giving of non-prescribed medications.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/06/2016	Full	Good
12/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/05/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- 'Managing medicines in care homes (March 2014)' is a guideline that applies across both health and social care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.17) In particular, section 1.16.1 of this guidance sets out the need to record the reasons for administering non-prescribed medications.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child 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. In order to improve practice, staff must ensure that the home's individual care plans set out, for each child, how staff take steps to identify barriers to success and identify key areas for direct work in order to help young people take small steps to achieve progress. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Leaders and managers pay close attention to matching the needs of young people. They provide sufficient resources and plan care in order to meet the needs of each child, both on an individual and group-living basis. This minimises the potential for disruption to occur to young people who live in the home. As a result, young people, whether they stay for short breaks or more permanent periods, have a positive experience of care and make progress. One placing social worker reported that, when admitting a young person to the home, staff were welcoming, professional and made sure that they had all the information they needed to care for him. This helps to ensure that leaders and managers will only admit young people if they are confident that they can meet their needs.

All young people leaving the home since the last full inspection did so in accordance with their relevant care plans; no young people left in an unplanned way. Several young people were able to return to live with their families and all young people benefited from their time in the home. Several of these young people are still in touch with staff; this shows that they value the relationships that they made in the home.

One young person, who moved recently and returned home to his family, made exceptional progress in terms of his behaviour. This was a direct result of positive strategies that the staff developed alongside this young person. He was able to set his own goals for improved behaviours and agree how this would be rewarded. The young person was encouraged to look back and identify where he had met or not met his targets. As a result, incidents of him behaving negatively reduced. Staff were able to share this approach with the young person's school and family. He is now able to regulate his emotions better and modify his behaviour to consider others. The young person is learning that he can achieve his goals through positive behaviour.

Young people experience genuine love and care. Staff develop trusting relationships with the young people and pay close attention to how they are feeling. Young people who have limited verbal communication skills use a variety of communication techniques and visual aids. This helps young people, as far as possible, make choices and share their feelings with staff. This promotes a sense of self-worth and belonging.

Where young people have complex health needs, staff are trained to provide specialist support. They ensure that young people receive medical attention when this is needed. If young people have prescribed medication, staff make sure that they receive the agreed dose at the correct time. This is clearly and efficiently recorded. Managers regularly monitor and audit medication records. This reduces the risk of errors. However, staff do not always record the reasons that young people are given non-prescribed medications. This makes it hard to monitor and difficult to spot whether, for example, a young person has recurring headaches or symptoms that may need further investigation by a health professional. Non-prescribed medications are used sparingly and there is no impact in terms of the young people's health and well-being.

Staff have a good understanding of how young people may be experiencing the world as a result of their learning disabilities. They have undertaken in-depth training on understanding young people who may be on the autistic spectrum. Staff use this knowledge to develop individual care plans for each child. This helps guide staff to maximise young people's potential, reduce any risks of harm and enhance their experience of day-to-day living. However, the home's written care plans are not of a consistent quality. Some clearly identify how staff are supporting young people to achieve their goals and make progress but others do not. This runs the risk that young people may not receive consistent care. In addition, their achievements and progress could be missed. This is an issue of recording as, in practice, staff provide good-quality, consistent care to all of the young people.

Young people benefit from clear boundaries, structure and routines. Staff know the young people well and understand that the smallest details can be important to their comfort and security. They know what young people like and dislike and what is helpful and unhelpful to them. Staff appreciate what brings young people comfort or causes them distress. Because staff understand and respond to what matters to young people, they are able to establish a safe, secure base for them. This enables staff to support young people and enforce boundaries effectively without provoking unnecessary distress.

or upset. This also ensures that staff have a good level of detail that enables them to understand what young people can do for themselves and what they need more help with. In one example, staff noticed that a young person was able to clean their own teeth, but did not apply enough attention to their back teeth. Staff intervene and work alongside the young people to improve their oral hygiene and, until they can do it themselves, staff provide assistance. This promotes young people's health and well-being and teaches them skills for independent living. It is also what a good parent would do.

Parents are positive about the care and support given to their children. One parent commented, 'I love it, he loves it. He [parent's child] gets on well with staff and other children and I have no worries when he is there.' This is a consistent theme with feedback from other parents who report that their children like the home and that the standards of care are high. Parents also say that staff communicate well with them. One parent particularly appreciates the regular reports from staff that tell her how her child is doing.

Placing social workers are consistently positive in their feedback about the quality of care provided by the home. They collectively paint a picture of a staff team that has good insight into the needs of young people and that works well in partnership. They describe staff as responsive and quick to carry out agreed actions to ensure that young people get the support that they need. All placing social workers noted how the young people they have placed in the home make progress, improve their behaviour and benefit from structure and routines.

All young people engage with, and do well in education. Staff work positively in partnerships with schools and have detailed information on how young people are progressing. Staff attend education planning meetings and ensure that young people get the support that they need to get to school on time, ready and well prepared to get the most out of their school day.

Young people take part in a range of structured activities during their free time and in school holidays. They go out on trips to local parks, shopping centres, cinemas and restaurants. Staff support young people to do the things they enjoy. They also support young people to try new things and, as a way of encouraging them, attach a new experience to trips that young people have chosen. This is particularly important for some young people who may find new experiences difficult. This broadens their opportunities for learning and having fun.

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

Young people are safe. Staff are aware of the vulnerabilities of each young person. They take steps to reduce risks and provide high levels of support and supervision to young people. Some young people are particularly vulnerable as a result of their learning disabilities. Staff undertake specialist training to understand how this might increase risks factors. They are particularly vigilant when escorting young people in the community and each young person has a safety plan that is specific to them.

Young people who are more independent, and go out unescorted, are supported to stay safe. In one example, staff initially escorted a young person to college for two weeks to ensure that he could safely use public transport and was aware of potential dangers. The young person is now able to attend college unescorted and stay safe in the community. Staff have equipped him with a number of strategies to remain safe and to be able to access help in the event that he is worried or finds himself in difficulties. Staff are proportionate in the way they manage risk and balance the need to keep young people safe and, at the same time, promote their independence.

Parents and placing social workers say that young people are safe in the home. One social worker commented that staff worked very effectively to manage one young person who was at risk in the community. He felt that this young person was safer and making better choices as a result of the support and guidance provided to him by staff. Young people seldom go missing and in the event that they do, staff have a clear protocol for each young person. This identifies the actions needed to locate the young person quickly and ensure their safe return. These actions are consistent with agreed procedures and statutory guidance on how to respond if young people are absent or missing from care.

Staff work effectively in partnership with other agencies in response to concerns about the safety of young people. The registered manager is vigilant and takes prompt action to respond to any allegations of staff misconduct. She shares information effectively with the placing authority and works with them to ensure that any concerns are thoroughly and impartially investigated.

Staff undertake training in key areas of child protection so they can recognise signs if young people are vulnerable to sexual exploitation or radicalisation. They understand their responsibilities to share information and they know how to act in order to keep young people safe. Staff closely monitor the use of the internet and social media devices. This prevents young people from accessing unsuitable materials or being at risk of grooming or bullying via the internet.

Young people are generally well behaved. The atmosphere in the home is calm and friendly. Staff are able to help young people manage their emotions and anxieties. Incidents of challenging behaviour are managed effectively. Staff use appropriate techniques to de-escalate situations. Physical intervention is seldom used and staff work with young people to learn from mistakes and put things right. This teaches them important life skills and enhances their day-to-day experience of group living in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is effective in her role. She provides clear guidance and leadership to the staff team. Staff value the support and direction that she provides. One staff member reported that she feels able to raise any issues or concerns and that the registered manager will listen to her. Another staff member described how she feels that the management team is interested in her well-being and offers her support through times of challenge. This creates a safe space for staff to explore the emotional impact of

their work. This has a positive impact on young people as it allows staff to reset their feelings and work through difficulties. Such an approach also means that staff stick with young people who are in crisis and so avoid unplanned placement endings.

The registered manager of the home has effective systems in place to monitor the quality of care given to young people. She ensures that care is delivered in a way that is consistent with the home's statement of purpose. She quickly spots any shortfalls in practice and takes remedial action to improve practice. The home has had some challenges recently due to staff sickness. As a consequence, some of the written records are not yet of a consistently high standard. Shortfalls in keeping written risk assessments up to date have the potential to undermine safe practice in the home. This is an area that needs more rigorous management oversight and scrutiny. This is also an area that staff need to ensure that they keep on top of. The registered manager recognises this and has a clear development plan in place to make improvements.

The responsible individual of the home provides effective supervision and support to the registered manager. They work together effectively to deliver an ambitious, creative and young-person focused model of care. The provider invests significantly in training for staff. Training in social pedagogy encourages staff to be creative, hands-on and thoughtful about the way they look after young people. The members of the leadership team are reflective in their approach and model good practice for staff. They are inclusive and regularly consult with staff on all matters relating to practice.

The registered manager of the home is respected within the professional network. She provides constructive challenge and ensures that the experiences of young people inform care planning.

The registered manager of the home promotes a positive culture where difference is celebrated. Staff work hard to promote equality of opportunity within the home. As a result, young people learn to respect each other and understand how their behaviour may impact on the feelings and well-being of others.

The recommendations made at the previous inspection have been met. The home's statement of purpose now accurately reflects the way care is delivered in the home. Further improvements have been made to ensure that care plans for young people who have complex health needs are informed by healthcare professionals.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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: SC025940

Provision sub-type: 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, social care inspector

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