

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC422464
Inspector	Parveen Hussain
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Town Hall Church Street BARNSELY South Yorkshire S70 2TA
Responsible individual	Diane Erica Drury
Registered manager	Diane Wharton
Date of last inspection	27/03/2014

Inspection date	10/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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The overall effectiveness of the home is adequate. This is in part due to the difficulties faced by the temporary acting manager and the limited access to records. There are shortfalls: with physical interventions not adequately recorded; care plans not reviewed in a timely way; children accommodated at the home against the procedures identified in the statement of purpose; and deficits in staffing, leading to some children having their short breaks cancelled. In addition, supervision of staff is not always delivered in a timely way (although staff are well supported by each other).

There are positives in the quality of care provided by staff in that they are able to meet the complex and challenging needs of the children and young people. Staff are passionate about their work and build excellent relationships with schools and social workers to promote progress for children and young people. Staff have good awareness of the triggers to negative behaviours and manage this through effective de-escalation strategies. This ensures children are kept safe from their own behaviours and those of others. Children are safe and report feeling safe at the home.

Children and young people make good progress in their development. They learn new skills to help promote and maximise their independence. Children and young

people take part in various activities both in the home and away. This ensures they are not restricted from taking part in the fun activities and outings available. Children and young people feel their views about their care and the running of the home are heard. They participate with decorating the home and personalising their rooms for the duration of their stay.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home, run by a local authority, provides accommodation for up to 10 children with complex care needs arising from profound and multiple learning disabilities, autism and other associated health needs. The home provides a short-breaks service.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2014	Interim	good progress
18/12/2013	Full	good
26/03/2013	Interim	good progress
15/10/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
5 (2001)	keep under review, and where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and notify HMCI of any such revision (Regulation 5 (a) (b)).	31/01/2015
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume (Regulation 17B (3)).	31/12/2014
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home (Regulation 25 (1)).	31/01/2015
28	maintain in respect of each child a permanent	31/12/2014

(2001)	record that is kept up to date (Regulation 28 (1) (b)).	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. In particular, that all carpets are in good repair and stain free (Standard 10.3)
- ensure all staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (Standard 19.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people make good progress and outcomes are significantly increased as a result. They benefit from the warm, nurturing environment that is promoted by staff. Children and young people receive high levels of praise and encouragement irrespective of their difficulties. This helps them achieve their potential in line with their individual and diverse needs and promotes their confidence. Children and young people benefit from the close interactions with staff and other young people. They learn to socialise, share and enjoy activities together. This enhances their social skills and teaches them to build positive, lasting friendships.

Children and young people gain from the consistent approach from staff to help them maintain their personal health. They make improvements in all aspects of their personal care. They learn to shower, change their clothes and brush their teeth independently. Children and young people enjoy wholesome meals and learn from partaking in cooking these. They enjoy attending youth clubs and going bowling. They engage in physical activities and exercise to promote their overall health. Some children and young people, restricted due to their mobility or who have communication difficulties also benefit from engaging in the positive activities during their stay. This ensures all children and young people enjoy and learn from new experiences which otherwise may not be available to them. As children and young people become more settled and secure with the staff team, they become more confident and self-assured. They engage with specialist health and therapeutic services to help develop insight into their psychological needs and backgrounds. As a result this leads to them developing emotional resilience. Children and young people do not engage in smoking or substance misuse.

Children and young people have excellent attendance at school. They make good educational progress in line with their individual care plans and special needs statements. The majority of children and young people using the short breaks service attend the same school. The close liaison and excellent information sharing that takes place between staff and school ensures children and young people's educational progress and achievements are continuously monitored and celebrated.

Children and young people take part in local events and are a fundamental part of the local community. They take regular trips to the parks, shopping centres and visit places of interest. Many of the children live in the local area and fully integrate with the community. They access local services such as libraries and youth clubs and make new friendships. They take part in local activities at Halloween and on Bonfire Night. In addition, the home arranges their own parties and disco's which children and young people all enjoy participating in.

Staff ensure there are no barriers preventing children and young people from exploring their surroundings safely and achieving their potential. They are encouraged to be proactive and make informed choices in all aspects of their lives. As a result, children and young people make positive progress in all areas of their development. One parent commented on how well her child behaved when at the home and how much he enjoyed his time there. Another parent commented on how much they valued the service as not only did it give them a break but was also enjoyable for their child.

Some looked after children who are not living at home with their families are supported to engage in contact with family members. They feel safe and therefore reap the benefits of contact with important people in their life. As a result, children and young people benefit from an enhanced sense of identity and better understanding of the reasons leading to them being in care.

Older children acquire skills that support their transition to adulthood. This sense of achievement along with their new skill set helps them to maximise their independence.

Quality of care

good

Dedicated staff ensure children and young people are provided with good quality care regardless of their complex and challenging behaviours. The calm and friendly atmosphere created by staff enables good interactions to take place. Staff prioritise the wellbeing of children and young people. This allows them to develop trust in staff and have positive and healthy relationships.

Staff are responsive and consistent in their approach. They are caring and sensitive and promote positive behaviours through praising children and young people. Staff utilise strategies based on children's age and level of understanding to promote positive change. They use sticker charts and treats to reward younger children. Outings, games and activities are the preference for older children along with ample praise and encouragement for all. One parent said, 'Staff are always welcoming, available and very helpful'.

Staff are passionate about promoting the life chances for children and young people. They take care to ensure children and young people eat balanced, healthy meals. Alternative options are available for those unhappy with the menu. Children and young people's views about the foods they like and dislike are taken into consideration when menu plans are made. This ensures children and young people are able to enjoy their favourite foods whilst being taught to respect the choices of others. One young person said, 'I like all the food I don't care who chose it'.

Staff support children to have good attendance at school. They are taught to value their education and work hard to achieve their full potential. Staff create excellent

relationships with education professionals to benefit children and young people. They liaise with teachers to ensure schools are updated about children and young people's emotional wellbeing. They ensure transport arrangements are in place so children and young people do not experience any disruption with travel. The committed and passionate staff group attend meetings and reviews at school to support parents and ensure consistency for children with reading and home learning. This helps improve children and young people's numeracy and literacy skills. It also ensures the service is equipped to meet the educational needs of children and young people to promote their educational progress.

Children and young people enjoy a range of leisure activities. A plethora of board games, DVD's and activities are available for children to enjoy during their stay. There is a pool table and air hockey table that older children thoroughly appreciate. Children with more complex needs significantly enjoy and benefit from the high quality sensory room and soft play area. Staff engage children and young people in positive and fun activities such as arts and crafts. Their design creations are used to decorate the home. The combined efforts of staff and children have led to the colourful Christmas theme that runs throughout the home. Children and young people spend time at local youth clubs and all children benefit from taking walks and visits to the park. The secured outdoor play area provides children and young people with a safe and play area to explore their surroundings.

The home is comfortably furnished and provides children and young people with a highly warm and homely feel. There are separate lounge areas for children and young people to socialise with others according to their levels of need and ability. Children and young people are supported to personalise their bedrooms during their stay. They are given a choice of bedding to make their stay as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. Bathrooms and bedrooms are expertly adapted to meet the specific requirements of children and young people with mobility issues. This enhances the experiences of children and young people during their short stay whilst promoting their independence. One carer commented, 'Staff are so flexible, they let me come in and use the specialist facilities even when my child wasn't having a short break. They also supported me with extra day care. Staff are great here. I haven't come across anyone that isn't helpful.'

Staff strictly adhere to care plans and undertake hourly checks on children with complex needs and administer medication according to procedures. Staff go the extra mile to ensure bedroom furniture is positioned where children feel safe and comfortable. This helps them to settle better at night and feel reassured that staff are sensitive to their diverse needs.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Some physical interventions that are deemed necessary to keep children and young people safe are not recorded. This is an oversight on part of the Registered Manager and staff who have not recognised their actions as a physical intervention. This leads to a shortfall in the records and ability to monitor practice for its safety. Restraints that are recorded are appropriately used to prevent injury or damage to property. Staff are well trained and have adequate, in-house provision through experienced behaviour management trainers. A refresher course is taking place over the next few weeks. This should ensure staff and managers have full insight into the need for records being accurately maintained and those using the service are provided with detailed accounts of their experiences.

Children are kept safe by staff. Staff provide close supervision to all children and ensure their behaviours do not impact on others negatively. Where behaviours become challenging and aggressive, staff consistently apply positive behaviour management strategies to help children learn to appropriately engage with others. This helps children build trusting relationships with adults and helps them build strong relationships with each other. Staff have a good knowledge of the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of children and use their skills and knowledge to de-escalate potential situations. This ensures children are supported to manage their emotions and behaviours safely without any negative consequences.

The safety of children is further enhanced by thorough recruitment and vetting procedures. All staff working at the home are permanently employed by the local authority. New staff are recruited subject to satisfactory safeguarding checks and verification of references. This ensures children accessing short breaks are cared for by people who are deemed safe to do so.

Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and know how to manage potential safeguarding allegations and concerns. They report concerns to relevant authorities and work closely with social workers to ensure investigations are undertaken swiftly and sensitively. A recent safeguarding concern was managed appropriately with good multi-agency working. Staff maintain their relationship with parents to ensure children continue to get the most from their short break and are able to return home safely.

The home environment is physically safe and secure for children. Fire safety tests and drills are undertaken regularly to ensure children and staff are clear of the procedures. This further contributes to the physical safety of children.

Leadership and management

adequate

Leadership and management are adequate.

A temporary, acting manager has been appointed with effect from the 8 December 2014 in the absence of both the registered and assistant managers. The temporary, acting manager has management experience from a previous role of assistant

manager and also has relevant qualifications for managing the service. She is committed to the new role and dedicated to the children and families using the service.

The recent disruption to management has led to the temporary, acting manager encountering some difficulties in accessing systems and records. This compromises her ability to prepare for and fully implement the role. These shortfalls are being looked into by senior managers. Together with the service manager, there are plans to develop the home further to enhance the services for children, young people and their families.

Shortfalls in staffing due to sickness levels are negatively impacting on service delivery and have led to the cancellation of short breaks for some children. For the majority of children who regularly receive a service, parents, professionals, staff and children say that the service is of good quality and meets the needs of children and young people. The management are realistic and understand the potential need for the employment of agency staff to be explored at this time. This will help relieve the permanent staff from the extra shifts they are covering.

Care planning, reviewing and record keeping are not always clear or up to date and therefore impact on a child's record of their experiences and their future plans. Risk and protective factors are clearly being recognised by staff however records are not being updated in line with progress and the developing needs of children. Staff record progress in children and young people's individual daily logs and not within the care plans. This can affect the manager's ability to evaluate the quality of care and progress, and to appropriately update care plans for individual children. Some efforts are made to chase up overdue and untimely reviews.

There are some gaps in supervision being delivered in a timely way. Staff value the supervision and support from within the team. This provides them with opportunities for learning and reflection and helps them to keep young people safe.

Staff undertake a wide range of training to ensure their skills are appropriate to meet the complex and diverse needs of children and young people. Staff have appropriate care qualifications which promotes their competence. Staff use their skills and knowledge to effectively help children and young people succeed. This ensures children and young people are afforded good quality care by people equipped to meet their needs.

The statement of purpose has not been made available to Ofsted although the Registered Manager has reviewed the document bringing it in line with regulations. The document ensures stakeholders are clear that the aims and objectives of the service are for short breaks. However, the local authority has since placed a child on a temporary basis whilst an alternative placement is sought. This action breaches the homes admission policy as a short breaks service. In addition, there is likely to be a negative impact on the child given he is the only one living at the home on a full time

basis.

Management functions such as investigating complaints, identifying strengths and monitoring and evaluating the quality of care and strong. Outcomes of complaints are fed back to staff as part of improving learning and development. The homes leadership team have demonstrated capacity for implementing improvements in the past and have a good track record to ensure young people's needs are prioritised. The registered manager's quarterly monitoring is evaluative. The independent visitor's reports have improved and provide clear evaluation. The management are taking on board comments from the independent visitor to make valuable improvements in the lives of children and young people with complex health and development needs.

The physical home environment is safe and appropriately maintained to a good standard with repairs being consistently undertaken. Some hallway carpets were stained and have been replaced. However, a bedroom carpet remains stained. The management are looking into replacing this to ensure children and young people live in a comfortable and homely environment where their needs can be prioritised.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.