

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	18/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC422464
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Church Street Barnsley South Yorkshire S70 2TA

Responsible individual	Mr Jonathan Banwell
Registered manager	Mrs Diane Wharton
Inspector	Jennifer Fenlon

Inspection date	18/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained progress
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

SC422464

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people experience short breaks that they enjoy and gain good-quality time in which to socialise.
- Children and young people receive individualised care, which has been planned in partnership with parents and professionals.
- Partnership working with parents is highly effective. They hold the service in high regard as it meets their children's needs within a safe environment.
- There is a consistent and stable staff team, which provides children and young people with specialised, high-quality care.

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 children's guide should help children to understand what the day-to-day routines of the home are ('what happens in the home') and how to contact the office of the Children's Commissioner. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

This is with particular reference to reviewing the children's guide and the terminology which is used and to including the name and address of the Children's Commissioner.

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make the best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulation 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

This is with particular reference to the completion of the regulation 45 review. The report should provide an action plan to improve and maintain the quality of care.

- Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them to record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

This is with particular reference to the home providing children and young people with a photographic overview of their experiences and friendships.

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risk 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)

This is with particular reference to the registered manager ensuring that the staff team completes and reviews risk assessments and care plans in line with the home's statement of purpose.

- Homes must gain consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority in writing at the time of placement. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

This is with particular reference to staff receiving supervision in line with the home's statement of purpose and to providing opportunities to explore work practices and to identify training and development needs.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks for up to eight young people who have learning disabilities and physical disabilities, and some of whom may have challenging behaviour.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2016	Interim	Sustained progress
21/07/2015	Full	Good
12/02/2015	Interim	Improved progress
10/12/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children and young people gain positive experiences and enjoy a variety of activities, such as pool, indoor soft play, a sensory room and many more indoor play opportunities. In addition, the staff support children and young people to participate in community-based activities, such as going to the beach, the local shops or parks. Parents and carers report that their children benefit from the social element of the home. This provides children and young people with time and space to relax, socialise and develop friendships. These experiences are captured in an activity folder. However, children and young people do not receive copies of this record to help them to recall memories and emotions. Children and young people make good friendships because their individual needs, personalities and preferences are taken into account when their visits are being planned. For example, a parent commented that her child's planned breaks took into consideration his age and gender, and this meant that he had the opportunity to make friends. Children and young people are welcomed into the home and are helped to settle by staff who understand their needs. The home is newly decorated, and offers a variety of living areas and facilities. Bedrooms are arranged to suit the personal preferences of children and young people, including their choices of favourite bedding. One parent commented that, because her child's stay at the home is so well planned and welcoming, he is settled and wants to stay. One child said: 'The home is cool. You can stay the night, and get your own room.' Children and young people are supported to maintain good attendance at school during their short breaks. Staff communicate with the school daily via a home/school book. This ensures that relevant information is shared, to promote engagement both at school and the home. Staff attend annual education reviews for children and young people. These provide a clear overview of the individual child's needs, in order that information can be shared and effective multi-agency plans developed. Children and young people are supported to develop their life skills and to complete their personal care routines, to ensure that they are prepared for the day. For example, some young people are taught how to prepare breakfast, while others are patiently encouraged to take a bath or shower. These are small but significant steps for young people who have complex needs and they represent good progress from their starting points.	

Young people are also supported in their moves to adult care services. Staff attend any required meetings or make visits to adult provisions to ensure that this transition goes smoothly for young people. This significant step is marked for young people by a farewell celebration and the promise of 'open door' arrangements to enable young people to keep in contact and visit. A parent said that their elder child was supported by the staff to move into adult services and, three years later, 'He still talks positively about his experiences at the home.'

Staff listen to what children and young people have to say, and they make sure that their choices and preferences, such as individual menu choices for example, are acted upon. Healthy eating is encouraged, and one parent reported that this approach had helped to keep her son's weight under control.

This is an inclusive home that celebrates and values difference in a way that does not make children and young people feel stigmatised. For example, on one occasion, a child had a meal of fish fingers specially prepared by his parents in order to meet his specific medical needs. Staff provided a similar meal for the rest of the group. This normalised the child's experience and enabled him to enjoy the social occasion along with his friends.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children and young people are safe during their short breaks. Parents confirm that they feel that their children are safe here. One parent said that she used to call the home all the time to check on her son, but now she knows he is safe and is confident that staff would contact her if they needed to. Children and young people are safe because staff know how to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns. Children and young people are closely supervised, both in the home and when out in the community. These high levels of supervision, combined with effective safeguarding procedures, mean that the risk of children going missing or being sexually exploited is minimised. Children and young people are protected by the effective administration of medication, sound recruitment procedures, information on how to use the internet safely and accurate risk assessments. However, the evaluation of children's and young people's relationships with each other is not recorded in their risk assessments. This has no direct impact on them, but may make planning and support for short breaks less effective.	

Staff understand how children who have complex needs may communicate their feelings through their behaviour. As a result, behaviour is managed well, and there is no need for sanctions or physical restraint.

Surveillance, in the form of door alarms, is also used to protect children and young people. This is done with the agreement of parents and on a risk-assessed basis. However, these agreements are not always signed by the local authority social worker, which means that an important monitoring element is missing.

The children's guide to the home gives a good range of advice and information to children and young people and their parents. However, this document does not include the address of the Children's Commissioner. This closes off an avenue by which they could make a complaint. The guide also occasionally describes the home as a 'unit', which suggests an institution rather than a home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager has been registered at the home since 2011. This has given the home a significant amount of stability. She is appropriately qualified and is supported by an experienced staff team. Staffing arrangements provide children and young people with consistent care. For example, the staff member who puts them to bed will be on shift in the morning when they wake. A professional reports that the home functions well and the feedback from those who use the service is 'very good'. The staff team is very well established. This provides continuity of care and familiarity to children and young people who use the service. A parent said: 'They know him better than me. They are really informed and continue to ask questions.' In the registered manager's six-monthly monitoring of the home, outcomes are clearly defined. However, there is no clear action plan, with agreed timescales, to promote further improvement. This is a lost opportunity to build on the already good outcomes achieved for children and young people. Staff and management have a good relationship with parents and carers, and there is a strong focus on partnership and communication. This ensures that staff offer the best support and experiences for children and young people. For example, an opportunity was provided for a parent to attend a staff meeting to provide the team with an accurate insight into her child's complex medical needs. This effective	

partnership working helped to create a clear and detailed care plan for the child.

Staff report that they receive strong support from each other, in addition to regular formal supervision and professional development. The registered manager has a system to monitor the fulfilment of these tasks, such as supervision and training, but target dates are not always met. This may cause drift in objectives being achieved.

The quality of introductions to the service and the level of engagement with children, young people, families and professionals enable staff to create comprehensive care plans and risk assessments. However, these documents are not always completed and reviewed, in line with the home's statement of purpose. This means that information on children's needs may not always be accurate.

The registered manager has links in the local community, organising fund-raising events, which have resulted in donations of activity equipment. This benefits children and young people, giving them fun and enjoyment, as well as building good community relationships.

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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