

SC422464

Registered provider: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by the local authority. It provides care and accommodation through short-break arrangements for up to 10 children who have learning and/or physical disabilities, some of whom have complex health conditions.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2011. She has significant experience and knowledge of working with children with disabilities and complex health needs.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 September 2021

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: 13 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2020	Full	Good
05/04/2018	Full	Good
13/06/2017	Full	Good
22/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children benefit from good care. The children's individual needs are understood and are responded to well by the capable and caring staff team. Parents are positive about the progress that their children have made since staying for short breaks at the home.

Staff consult with parents, before children arrive for their short break, to establish if there are any changes to the children's care needs. Staff ensure that the children's needs are fully understood and met during their short-break stays.

Children are introduced to the home in a planned way. Initial planning meetings take place to ensure that the children's needs are fully understood. It is evident that children's needs are carefully considered when making decisions about what day a child should attend for their short break. The introduction is specifically tailored to the child's individual needs. This ensures that the children have positive introductions and experiences when they stay at the home.

Staff know the children well, so they are consistent in their approach and are able to meet the children's needs. Parents are involved in developing the children's care plans. These plans are up to date, set targets and show the progress that children make. While these care plans and behaviour support plans do address the children's needs, they lack some detail to give more of a sense of the child.

Targets and goals for the children are agreed with parents and the staff at the children's schools. The targets relate to the children's individual development needs. Children are making good progress and their achievements are captured and celebrated.

Children receive good support, take part in lots of fun activities and enjoy a range of new experiences. Children have visited a range of places, including parks, football stadiums, nature trails, local cafes and farms. These trips and activities are captured well by the staff.

In some areas, the home does not have a particularly homely presentation. There is some noticeable wear and tear, and the decor is looking tired and outdated. These detract from the overall presentation of the home.

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

Children's risk assessments are up to date. They outline known risk factors and set out the strategies for the staff to follow to reduce the children's known risks. The risk assessments are regularly reviewed with clear management oversight. Children receive a consistent approach from staff because of this.

Children's behaviour is supported well. There have been very few incidents of physical intervention. Staff know the children's behaviour well; they are attuned to subtle changes and respond quickly to prevent any escalation in behaviour. When incidents do occur, support is provided to the children and this helps them to settle quickly. There is management oversight, and reflective discussions are held with the staff following these incidents. However, these discussions are not recorded within the incident report. This oversight prevents the manager from developing the staff's practice further.

There has been one incident of a child going missing from the home. This was responded to well. There are plans and strategies in place for when this occurs, and the staff are very clear about what they must do. When the children go out in the community, the staff take essential equipment which may be needed in the event of an incident of concern. This is good practice and ensures that the children are safe when they are out in the community.

Staff have a good understanding and awareness of safeguarding, and safeguarding arrangements are well embedded. Staff have up-to-date training, and they promote children's welfare well. Children receive a high level of support and care, and staff have a detailed understanding of the children's needs. This helps to better protect the children from harm. Parents have no concerns about their children's safety while at the home.

The manager ensures that regular health and safety checks are completed in the home. Risk assessments, relating to the home and activities, are up to date and reviewed regularly. This means that staff have all the necessary up-to-date information and strategies to keep the children safe in the home.

New staff are recruited safely, and appropriate checks are carried out. Staff receive a good induction and suitable training when they start their employment. This helps to ensure that the children are looked after by people who are skilled and suitable to do so.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the home closed for the safety and well-being of the children. Parents reported that both they and their children had struggled during the closure. Parents are positive about the outreach help that was provided and said that this had supported them emotionally at the time. The parents said that this and a summer programme of activities have been beneficial. This ongoing support helps children and families stay together.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has extensive experience of working with disabled children. The manager is also supported by a very capable experienced senior team. The manager and senior team are committed to providing the best care and experiences for the children. The manager has a good oversight of the home.

The manager has a good understanding of the children's needs. She is passionate, very child focused and very supportive to their families. The manager ensures that the children receive good care and support.

Communication with children's social workers, schools and other professionals is good. Regular updates are provided, and any incidents of concern are shared. This collaborative approach provides good support and guidance for the children and their families.

Staff have access to training and development opportunities. Mandatory training is up to date, and the manager knows when this is due for renewal. The manager ensures that the staff have the skills and training to meet the children's needs.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development, and they are committed to ensuring the continuous improvement of the home. A detailed improvement plan helps them to remain focused so that they can continue with their ongoing progress.

Staff report that they are well supported. However, there are some gaps in the staff's supervision. Safeguarding, and expectations in relation to the quality standards, are not standing items for discussion in supervision. This lack of structure hinders the manager in delivering more focused supervision, and could lead to some important issues not being addressed.

The staff are very motivated and committed to providing good care for the children. However, team meetings do not take place regularly. This means that the staff are not provided with further opportunities to discuss the children's changing needs and reflect and enhance their practice.

External monitoring does not take place in line with regulations. Many independent visits to the home have been completed virtually. The visitor has not routinely consulted with other professionals, the staff or the children. In addition, the reports are not always submitted in a timely way. This inhibits the regulator's ability to have oversight and monitor the safety and well-being of children effectively.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children, and is a homely, domestic environment. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than an 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC422464

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Gateway Plaza, Sackville Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 2RD

Responsible individual: Jonathan Banwell

Registered manager: Diane Wharton

Inspectors

Brian Wood, Social Care Inspector

Victoria Horsefield, HMI Social Care

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