

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC454484
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	Jan Jones
Date of last inspection	05/02/2014

Inspection date	03/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home is a warm, welcoming and fun place to live for young people. Staff are genuinely caring, funny and great to be around. Young people report being comfortable at home and describe it as a safe place they can return with their friends. Many young people who have moved on to independence continue to return on a regular basis. Staff are welcoming to all young people and professionals and make the house a home for young people.

Safeguarding procedures are good and staff know the individual and diverse needs of young people. Staff know how to respond in situations of concern and effectively communicate with professionals to ensure plans and reviews are up to date and adapted in line with young people's changing needs. Staff receive training that keeps their knowledge up to date and ensures they are effective at safeguarding young people. This ensures young people are protected and their needs prioritised.

Staff are competent at engaging young people in some form of education or training. Those young people who have not engaged previously take part and make progress in comparison to their starting points. This is a result of the quality of care young people are afforded. Leadership and management of the home are strong. Monitoring of the home is good externally although improvements are required to the internal monitoring and evaluation of the home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by the local authority. This setting provides five long-term placements for young people between 10 and 18 years of age, who may need support with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This long-standing service has recently moved to new premises.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2014	Interim	good progress
23/05/2013	Full	outstanding

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
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once every 3 months (Regulation 34 (1) (a)).	30/01/2015

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Outcomes for young people are significantly increased through living in this home. Young people benefit from a warm, nurturing environment where they build trusting relationships with staff. Young people are encouraged to take part in all aspects of running the home. For example, the staff team and young people have worked closely to decorate the home for Christmas. This helps them make strong relationships and attachments with staff that are maintained even after they leave care. As a result, from the point of admission, young people make good progress across a wide range of aspects of their welfare. Young people are supported to overcome past difficulties and hardships in their lives. They engage with staff and specialist services to gain insight and develop an understanding of themselves and their backgrounds. This enables young people to recognise the underlying factors which can prevent them from making positive changes.

Young people are all engaged in some form of education or training. Those at school or college make good progress as a result of their attendance and commitment and the support from staff who establish good relationships with education providers. Some young people choose to pursue alternative pathways and benefit from training schemes with provision for work placements. This enables them to gain hands on work experience while continuing with learning and development. From the point of admission, and in comparison to their backgrounds, young people make good progress educationally and benefit from having routines in their daily lives.

Young people feel nurtured and supported to safely explore personal issues and anxieties they may have relating to their identity, personal and sexual health, safety and relationships. The close relationships with staff enable them to develop trust and openly discuss their concerns. This enables young people to explore their feelings and broaden their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and adopt healthy lifestyles. Young people's individual needs are met through therapeutic and specialist services including bereavement counselling. These services help young people achieve emotional and psychological stability and contribute to maintaining placement stability. Young people are confident to make appointments with the doctor and take ownership and responsibility for their own physical health. This is improved through regular discussions with staff about the importance of regular exercise and eating healthily. This leads to improvements in young people's emotional health and well-being and increases self-esteem.

Young people enjoy good relationships with their peers and socialise well. They utilise their spare time playing board games and watching television programmes and DVDs together. They cook for each other and support each other with learning new skills. Despite the challenging behaviours some young people portray, young people learn to respect and show tolerance for each other. This helps them learn the importance

of making and sustaining friendships and essential life skills.

Young people work towards achieving independence and learn the necessary skills to make good progress after leaving care. Young people develop their advocacy skills and engage with service wide and national strategies to improve the lives and experiences of Looked after Children. This level of involvement and participation helps young people develop confidence and resilience and meet other young people.

Quality of care

outstanding

The staff team are dedicated to ensuring all young people regardless of their needs and backgrounds are afforded high quality care. Young people's well-being is always a priority and is central to the focused care provided by staff. This enables young people to enjoy extremely positive and healthy relationships with staff. Staff are exceptionally sensitive and caring and respond to young people with warmth. They use humour to help young people feel relaxed and at ease. As a result, young people begin to trust the adults caring for them and respond positively to support through staff and other agencies. A social worker commented on how 'the placement has been a steadying influence on a young person and has stabilised her'.

Staff are highly effective and nurturing when addressing young people's anxieties and concerns. Young people report staff listen to them and are sensitive, and they feel they can talk to them about many of the difficulties they encounter. Difficult behaviours in young people are addressed through staff being consistent in the strategies they adopt. They use their excellent knowledge of the triggers that affect young people and know how to respond to them. As a result, young people feel they are able to reflect on their behaviours and make positive changes. This enables them to achieve better outcomes.

Young people know how to complain and are confident to do so. They decide what to wear, what they eat, where they want to go and which activities they like to take part in. Young people feel their views are listened to and are highly respected.

The outstanding levels of care are further promoted through the detailed care plans. These are highly personalised to the individual and diverse needs of young people. Staff are imaginative and use their understanding of young people to help them improve their behaviour. An example of this is where staff are consistent in their response to a young person with special needs. This allows young people to feel safe and encourages them to quickly adapt and accept boundaries imposed by staff.

Risk assessments are thorough and staff respond to young people individually. They focus on promoting positive behaviours and seek strategies to help negate poor responses. As a result, young people know staff care about them and seek opportunities to help them flourish. This leads to extremely respectful relationships being created and sustained. This is evidenced through one young person who has

left care and continues to visit on a weekly basis.

Staff are proactive at rewarding the educational achievements of young people. The dedicated staff group make helping young people with homework and studies a top priority. This helps young people celebrate their achievements regardless of how insignificant they may appear. Staff ensure all young people living at the home take part in some form of education or training. This helps young people develop their basic literacy and creates futures opportunities. At the same time it reduces the chances of young people engaging in concerning and risk taking behaviours.

Staff work effectively with placing social workers, police officers and support services to ensure young people are kept safe in the community. The manager and staff team are immensely passionate about safeguarding young people. They articulate their concerns well with professionals. This leads to excellent multi-agency working with young people at the centre of all intervention. This helps ensure young people are kept safe and their needs are prioritised.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

The safety of young people is a high priority for the manager and staff team. Young people report feeling safe in the warm, nurturing and homely environment that is created by staff. Staff promote the safety of young people through highly individualised strategies. Young people take part in focused link work sessions to address pertinent issues. This includes the dangers of being missing, substance misuse and offending behaviours. As a result, young people become more insightful of the risks and are supported to change their behaviours to keep themselves safe.

There is no bullying in the home. Despite the challenging behaviour of some residents, young people say that staff respond immediately to minimise the impact of this on others. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety in line with their tailored care plans. This enables young people to take reasonable risks in accordance with their age and stage of development. Some young people are able to spend overnights away from the home with family and friends. As a result, young people feel the level of trust afforded to them contributes to significantly reduced incidents of them being missing from care.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and robust. There is an open and transparent approach taken by staff to reduce risks to young people. This is underpinned by comprehensive risk assessments which are reviewed and updated regularly. This takes place in line with young people's progress and development and their changing needs.

The registered manager is highly effective at communicating with a range of agencies and professionals. This includes making arrangements for strategy meetings. To avoid delay these are progressed in the absence of the social worker.

This evidences good practice, good working relationships and a high standard of communication between professionals, all of which contribute to keeping young people safe.

The competent and experienced staff team are skilled at deputising in the absence of the manager. Staff are trained in a range of safeguarding issues. They know how to respond when there are concerns about young people's safety. They are highly efficient at de-escalating potential incidents and reducing potential offending behaviour by young people. Where these behaviours do arise, staff utilise appropriate behaviour management strategies to minimise the need for restraints. This ensures physical interventions and sanctions are kept to a minimum and are used only where deemed necessary. Staff are trained to effectively and safely intervene in such situations. Staff are confident in their knowledge and ability to take appropriate action should safeguarding concerns arise.

Leadership and management

good

Management of the home is good. Young people benefit from a consistently effective manager who is highly experienced and knowledgeable with eighteen years of management experience and relevant qualifications.

Concerns are dealt with immediately with a focus on progress and outcomes for young people. External monitoring is effective and robust. The manager's internal monitoring extensively focuses on individual young people and provides a summary of their care. While this is positive, the report lacks a wider focus on the administrative aspect of managing the home. Despite this shortfall, young people, their parents, staff and professionals are regularly consulted. This enables the manager to effectively evaluate the quality of care and progress made by young people. In addition, the manager periodically and independently of her staff team seeks the views and consults young people. This approach allows them to raise any concerns they may have about their link worker or the general staff team.

A significantly positive factor is that the manager and staff team make every effort to consult parents and family members on a weekly basis. This helps keep parents informed and on board with their child's care plan. Such good practice initiatives ensure young people maintain important relationships; this in turn promotes their sense of identity and strengthens their emotional wellbeing.

Staffing levels are appropriate to the diverse needs and number of young people at the home. Supervision levels are adequate in ensuring staff are supported to effectively progress and develop professionally. Training provision is good for the already experienced and skilled staff team. This helps staff keep knowledge up to date and in line with legal, policy and procedural developments. Staff work well together to utilise each other's wealth of knowledge, expertise and care practice to ensure young people receive a high quality service. Overall, young people benefit

from a stable, experienced, committed and dedicated staff team who engage young people in every aspect of their care.

The home is decorated and maintained to an exceptionally good standard. It provides young people with a warm, homely feel and enables them to return home with their friends. Professionals and young people alike comment on how relaxed the atmosphere of the home is and how welcoming the environment is to all who visit.

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.