

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	05/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC033127
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	North East Lincolnshire Council
Registered provider address	Child Care Management Team, Civic Offices, Knoll Street, Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire DN35 8LN

Responsible individual	Daren Hale
Registered manager	Karen Stones
Inspector	Simon Morley

Inspection date	05/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC033127

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Children and young people benefit enormously from the positive experiences they encounter, both in the short-break provision and in long-term care.
- The exceptional quality of care helps children and young people to make outstanding progress in different aspects of their lives.
- Children and young people on short-breaks have the opportunity to meet up with their friends and participate in a wide range of activities at the home and in the community. Some of these benefits would not be possible without this service.
- Children and young people are valued for who they are, regardless of their needs. In turn, they value themselves and develop aspirations for their futures. Excellent care practices ensure that children's and young people's communication methods are fully understood and they feel listened to, and they know their wishes will be acted upon.
- The motivation and dedication of staff puts children's and young people's well-being, safety and progress at the heart of what they do.
- Children and young people are kept safe. There are robust and comprehensive procedures that are effectively used to keep them from harm.
- The manager is highly effective in leading the home from strength to strength. She has developed a very effective team that collaborates well together.
- There is exceptional partnership working with parents and other professionals, which plays a key role in making sure that children's and young people's diverse needs are fully met.
- Children, young people, their parents, staff and other professionals rate the service extremely highly.

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:

- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59). In particular, staff should complete the medical section of the restraint log to indicate if children needed medical attention afterwards, there should be a date when the restraint record is signed by the registered or authorised person and incident records should avoid ambiguous words such as 'guided' when describing the level of staff intervention.
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4).
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make 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 homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The local authority has registered this home to provide care and accommodation for up to 11 children and young people with learning and physical disabilities. The home is split into three smaller homes. The Bungalow provides long-term care for up to four children and young people. Rainbow and Starlight both provide short-break services, with Starlight catering for children and young people with additional complex health needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
26/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/12/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Children and young people make very significant progress in all aspects of their lives. This is a result of the targeted care they receive from the dedicated and committed staff team. There is exceptional partnership working between the home and education providers and with health professionals. This supports children to have consistency in their care across settings, develop new skills and ensures that their health needs, some of which are very complex, are fully met. The building of friendships and the growth of social and life skills are major achievements for children and young people when considering their experiences and needs on admission. The excellent, engaging approach from staff gives children confidence and provides them with the right environment to develop their abilities and feel good. One parent commented, 'The staff are outstanding in every manner.' The manager and staff know that the key to success is supporting children and young people to communicate, to be understood, to be acknowledged and to be valued. Staff strive hard to understand each individual and their different ways of communicating, such as knocking or tapping, their own signs, recognised Makaton, symbols and eye movement. This range of methods is fully understood by staff who ensure that children and young people are able to participate in decision-making and all activities within the home. One young person said, 'Staff are so kind and helpful.' Staff work closely with families who consistently praise staff efforts in getting to know their children. One parent commented, 'All staff know my child and his needs like I do.' There is excellent success in this area so that children and young people feel listened to and valued and know that staff will respond positively to their wishes and feelings. This creates a very strong sense of belonging, empowering children and young people to engage fully and build strong trusting relationships with staff. The genuinely caring nature of staff and their commitment to children's and young people's best interests allows them to thrive. Children and young people communicate their happiness about the home and staff. This is reflected in exceptional feedback from parents and professionals about the quality of care. Very good organisation allows for socialisation, activities, shared mealtimes and completion of bath-time and bedtime routines to support children and young people to have a good sleep. Time spent in the home is fun, happy, positive and rewarding. Children and young people have experiences that they would not necessarily encounter without short breaks. A parent said, 'He gets to take part in activities I would struggle to do.'	

In the Bungalow, children and young people receiving long-term care make outstanding progress. Health professionals described one young person as catatonic on admission, he returned to live successfully with his family. He made excellent progress with his communication and self-help skills, returned to education and his quality of life vastly improved.

Transition on leaving the home is another key strength of the service. One young person recently moved to an adult service provision with comprehensive support and planning. Again, this person made exceptional progress while at the home to be able to live successfully in the local community. The home has an excellent track record in this area and is maintaining it. Young people leave with comprehensive books of their time at the home, full of photos and memories. The very high standards of care and support give children and young people a boost to their confidence and develops a strong sense of well-being that prepares them well for adulthood.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children and young people are safe in this home. Staff help children and young people learn about risks to their safety. For example, 'stranger danger' to help to improve their awareness of personal safety. Children and young people also become safer by improving their behaviour and communication skills, learning to advocate for themselves, becoming more independent and less reliant on others for personal care. The manager is open and transparent in her practice and will share any concerns she has with parents and social workers. Risk management is thorough, and protects children and young people, while still allowing them to have fun and enjoy themselves. There are extensive risk assessments that link to children's and young people's diverse vulnerabilities, including specific medical conditions such as epilepsy, PEG feeding, tracheostomy and use of oxygen. There is also a direct digital video link to the local hospital if needed in an emergency. Short breaks are organised so that children and young people are not a risk to each other. High staffing levels give vulnerable children and young people the required levels of support and supervision. Staff are strong advocates, and they promote children's and young people's communication, wishes and feelings. Staff are vigilant and act on changes in children's and young people's behaviour and demeanour to protect their emotional well-being. For example, they advocated for one young person to have extra home contact after noticing his mood was lower when contact had previously reduced. This level of attention by staff had a positive	

impact on him. A professional worker commented, 'Staff always act in children's best interests and advocate for them.'

Most children and young people moving into the Bungalow are well known to staff as they nearly all have short breaks first. One young person did move straight into the Bungalow. Although the impact on existing residents was considered, this level of decision-making was not evident in admission records. Given that there had been several visits by staff prior to admission to assess his needs, this recording shortfall has not had an impact on the safety of others.

Children and young people experience nurturing care, consistent boundaries and positive structures that effectively reduce anxiety that can be caused from changes in routine. Parents are reassured that their children are in safe hands and they would recommend this service to others. Staff are trained to support children and young people with any challenging behaviour. The nurturing approach and positive attention to individual needs means that incidents are kept to a minimum. Staff only physically intervene as a last resort to keep children and young people safe. The methods used are minimal and with good management oversight to ensure that practice is appropriate. There are some shortfalls in record keeping relating to these incidents which potentially reduces accountability of staff actions and can compromise the responsibility to monitor children and young people after an incident.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager has been absent since the last full inspection. There are interim arrangements with an acting manager who has applied for registration to Ofsted. She has ample experience and is preserving the home's outstanding reputation. She is highly motivated and is a key force in driving improvement. There are notable positive changes to leadership and management. She is supported by a strong management team and there is an effective system of 'champions' that she has developed. As a team they are making a real difference in the lives of children and young people. Under these arrangements, children and young people continue to make significant progress compared to their needs and abilities on admission. This includes better social skills, more independence, improved emotional well-being, learning new self-care skills and developing more effective communication. Progress is comprehensively captured with photos and memory books and in six-monthly Signs of Safety reviews. A professional worker commented, 'Staff go above and beyond	

to ensure the best outcomes for children.'

Staff sickness is much lower, morale is a lot higher than previously. The staff team is enthusiastic and dedicated to providing children and young people with the best care. Communication between managers and staff is excellent, staff feel more involved and there is a much better leadership approach. Key to this is the effective use of restorative leadership. This is having an excellent impact on teamwork and a subsequent positive effect on the welfare of children and young people.

The high quality of staff support, training and supervision ensure that the wide-ranging needs of children and young people are fully met. Staff champions play a key role in keeping others up to date with practice from attendance at conferences in autism and safe moving and handling. All staff receive annual refresher training to care for children and young people with various health conditions, and there is ongoing support if needed. This contributes to the success of short breaks for children and young people with complex health needs. Research into specific conditions, for example pervasive refusal syndrome, is used to inform practice. A professional worker commented, 'Staff are committed to providing the best. They are proactive in promoting development.'

The manager has a thorough understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. This shows in her initiative to implement restorative leadership, develop the champions system and keep a strong focus on the needs of children and young people. She undertakes comprehensive monitoring of the service and her knowledge of all children and young people is high. She responds well to any complaints and robustly follows up any concerns. In contrast, the monitoring by independent visitors lacks evaluation and does not help contribute towards improving the service further. The provider was taking action about this at the time of inspection.

The manager and staff are proactive and work extremely well in building and maintaining effective working relationships with partner agencies and parents. This has a positive impact on children and young people, giving them the best support from a thorough, multi-agency approach that holistically meets their diverse needs.

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 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 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 who 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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