

SC034419

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short breaks for up to 4 disabled children at any one time and one child for over 17 days in an emergency.

At the time of the inspection, one child was staying at the home overnight. The home currently supports a total of 10 children for short breaks.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2022.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 25 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2025	Full	Good
13/02/2024	Full	Good
28/02/2023	Full	Good
16/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children staying in this home are consistently supported by caring, nurturing and committed staff. Staff know the children extremely well and understand their unique needs, characteristics and interests. Children's plans are detailed and give staff the knowledge needed to support children effectively. Children receive tailored care which reflects each child's specific experience and needs.

Children staying in the home make excellent progress in many areas of their lives. Staff recognise and celebrate the small steps each child takes toward independence. Children make significant progress in expressing their views and building positive and trusting relationships. The progress children make supports their self-esteem and helps to prepare them for the future.

The service is extremely valuable to families. Managers and staff instil confidence in the families and children. Managers and staff are excellent communicators and advocate for the children and families where needed. A family member described how their child had transformed since staying in the home. The child is now back in education and working towards their future aspirations. The child and their family have seen an improvement in their wellbeing because of the support provided by the staff. A family member said: 'This has been the hub and pivotal to things settling in other areas of our life'.

A clear strength of the home is staff's desire to understand the children and capture their views, wishes and feelings. Communication support for children is thoughtfully planned by managers and communication tools are strategically placed around the home and gardens.

Children engage in a wide range of activities in the home and most enjoy going out to explore the local area. Activities are planned with a view to helping children to practice and develop new skills and also to have new experiences. Children are encouraged to enjoy being teenagers and relaxing in the home. Activity logs and children's journals capture the children's memories of their time and fun experiences in the home.

Two children did not stay overnight for a period of time. Staff went above and beyond to support them in returning. Staff worked closely with professionals, seeking to understand the reasons and working towards thoughtfully planned stays in the home. They used a video story and visited the school to maintain relationships with children. Managers requested specialist referrals and worked closely to support the assessments to progress. As a result, one child has successfully built back up to overnight stays in the home.

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

Children express and demonstrate that they feel safe. The manager is determined to create an open culture within the home and to keep safeguarding central. The manager

has shared learning from national enquiries with staff and reflected upon these and how the staff can put their learning into practice. Staff clearly understand the risks which children face, and managers review these through clear guidance in children's plans.

Staff rarely use physical intervention in the home and incidents for children have reduced in frequency and intensity. Managers take timely and decisive actions after any incidents to learn and reflect with both children and staff. Managers have developed a range of accessible tools to communicate with children after an incident. Staff skilfully adapt and customise the tools to each child's unique communication style. This helps staff to have meaningful interactions with children. Learning is taken from these incidents to inform future practice.

Children do not go missing from the home due to close staff supervision, but managers ensure that the police understand the vulnerabilities of children in the home. The local Police Community Support Officer visits the home, and their picture is displayed for children as someone they might meet and can ask for help. Managers have built strong relationships with safeguarding partners.

Highly skilled staff provide clear and consistent boundaries for children and support them to develop routines. One child had no bedtime routine when they first came, and staff helped them to establish a positive routine which supports their overall wellbeing. Children feel safe and thrive because of the calm, purposeful and predictable routines in the home.

Managers and staff are mindful that children who have bruises or marks cannot always tell someone how they have occurred. Staff show professional curiosity and work closely with families, other providers and safeguarding professionals to ensure that they promote the safety of children. Information is shared promptly with safeguarding professionals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has become the sole registered manager of the home since the last inspection, and her strong leadership is evident. She is highly skilled, knowledgeable and experienced which is recognised by professionals nationally. She balances strong and decisive leadership, accountability and an open and inclusive learning culture where every view is welcomed. The manager is reflective, calm, firm and fair. She understands the children extremely well and actively pursues ways to further improve this. She works closely with her assistant manager to provide consistency of care, and together they work tirelessly to achieve this.

The manager seeks to continually develop her skills and knowledge, carrying out a wealth of research and training which is shared with her team. She also shares her knowledge and skills in local community groups for disabled children. In her free time the manager participates in a national forum which focuses on safeguarding disabled children. She is well respected in this forum for her expertise and knowledge. The information gathered at this forum is cascaded to staff to further enhance practice.

Managers and staff work closely with other professionals to support children to succeed in life. Communication is excellent. Managers welcome professionals and seek out their advice and expertise but also challenge in a respectful way when needed to advocate for children. This is always done in a child- focussed way. The manager welcomes professionals to visit the home and see the children.

Staff feel valued and supported by managers and receive regular high-quality reflective supervision. Staff have recently reflected on different theories during supervision sessions and how they implement these in their practice. Staff receive a wide variety of training which is required for the role, the needs of children and to develop their skills. Staff receive support and feedback on their performance throughout the year.

Managers have introduced new tools to analyse what is happening in the home and welcome the addition of new technologies to assist with this. Records and systems have improved in quality and are becoming more succinct. Managers use the monitoring tools effectively to identify patterns and trends to inform their planning and the care of children.

The home's statement of purpose contains some outdated language which does not reflect the language and the culture of the home. The statement of purpose does not give clear and concise information about emergency placements and transition to adulthood.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home's statement of purpose is reviewed in full. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)

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: SC034419

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 2DH

Responsible individual: Joanne Reeve

Registered manager: Claire Pooley

Inspector

Carol Jagger, Social Care Inspector

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