

# SC034480

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority. It provides care and support for up to six children with social and emotional needs.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home. Two children spoke to the inspector. One child was away from the home during the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2025.

### Inspection dates: 1 and 2 July 2025

|                                                                                           |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

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:** 27 June 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 27/06/2024      | Full            | Good                            |
| 12/04/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 06/12/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 22/02/2022      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

As a result of excellent support and collaborative working, children make remarkable progress from their starting points. Extensive training and support from the home's speech and language therapist and life coach help equip the staff to meet a vast range of complex needs.

The mix of children living in the home regularly changes. Children often move in after a crisis in their lives and in an emergency. They often stay for a short period of time, with the staff working to identify appropriate longer-term provisions for the children to move to. Relationship building is prioritised by staff. They quickly build extremely positive and trusting relationships with the children. Interactions between children and staff are open, warm and filled with mutual regard. This significantly helps children feel secure and receptive to the support offered by staff.

Since the last inspection, seven children have moved out to appropriate longer-term placements. Staff work closely with the children's professional networks to assess the children's needs. Moves for the children are exceptionally well planned. Leaders and managers strongly advocate on behalf of the children when potential moves are not suitable for them. In addition, when family reunification is possible, this is exceptionally well supported, with children and their families frequently supported by staff in an outreach capacity. This provides children with continuity of care and support.

Children's time in the home is marked and celebrated. Each child receives a leaving present and has a celebratory meal. This supports children to reflect on their time in the home and celebrate their successes. Children who have left speak positively about their experiences living at the home. One child said, 'I feel more independent than I ever have thanks to the incredible effort of all staff. There's a lot I'll take from this experience, and I will forever be thankful for that.'

When children arrive in the home, their education is often interrupted. Staff prioritise ensuring continuity to the children's education placements. Children are encouraged to attend their education settings every day. When there are barriers to education, such as transport, staff take the children. Staff support children to attend college open days and seek careers advice. One child successfully secured a job, with staff support. As a result of these approaches, children are making progress with their learning and children who did not previously attend education now attend regularly. These approaches have supported children to have higher aspirations for their futures.

Staff offer children the chance to participate in activities such as trips to theme parks, going for walks, having piano lessons, going to the gym and shopping. Staff understand the importance of friendships and encourage the children to spend positive time with their friends in the community. This helps children to spend meaningful time with others and develop their identities.

There is a very strong emphasis on working collectively with the people who are important to the children. The staff, leaders and managers are integral to this. Staff meet with families and external professionals on a regular basis to review and plan the children's care. Staff skilfully explore the children's views, wishes and feelings in imaginative ways. One child was supported to express their anxieties about moving on through the use of talking mats. Staff supported the child in co-creating their own plan for moving on. This reduced the child's anxiety and supported them to have a positive move to their new home. This helps children to feel heard and navigate complex situations.

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

When children go missing from the home, staff take effective action. Staff follow children and take necessary action to locate children. When children return, they are warmly welcomed home and supported to talk about the reason for their absence.

Staff work with the police and other local agencies to think about children's safety in the community. One professional said, 'We meet regularly. At the moment, it is near enough daily. The member of staff offered a very good perspective. The home are working extremely well with the safety plan. They do as much as they can to support [name of child]'s safety. The staff member came up with some very good ideas that we will take forward. They know the child really well and are trying to get it right for them.' Working collaboratively supports effective safety planning for the children.

Staff have regular detailed and reflective conversations with children. Input from the home's speech and language therapists supports staff to communicate with children in a purposeful way that children will understand. The staff's understanding of effective communication with children is regularly refreshed. This supports them to provide detailed engagement sessions to the children. As a result, children are helped to understand their vulnerabilities and supported to reduce them.

Staff are skilled in using de-escalation strategies to respond to children's anxieties. The use of physical intervention is rare. When used, it is proportionate and justified to reduce risk. After interventions, staff offer children medical attention and check on their emotional well-being. Managers review each incident and talk to children and staff about what happened. Learning from these conversations is shared and used to inform children's plans.

Staff use effective restorative consequences with children, who respond to these well. Children make progress in their ability to manage their emotions because of staff's support.

Children's experiences mean they are often very vulnerable. Staff are knowledgeable about these vulnerabilities and extensively risk assess children's needs to help ensure they are provided with safe care. Although incidents occur, quick responses to children's needs support children to keep them safer. However, some children's risk assessments

contain inaccurate information about who to contact if a child was to go missing from the home. This could lead to inconsistencies in staff's practice as the information does not reflect current arrangements.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The manager is experienced, qualified, ambitious, inspirational and child focused. She is supported by an equally motivated deputy manager and portfolio leads. The culture of the home is characterised by striving to achieve positive outcomes for children. Leaders and managers have created an environment where staff work confidently with high levels of autonomy.

Children are cared for by staff who are valued, respected and enthused by their work. The staff speak very highly of the management team. They feel exceptionally well supported and are motivated to provide high-quality care for the children. Leaders and managers take staff well-being seriously. They carry out regular well-being checks and ensure that staff are supported through regular supervision, team meetings and training.

The staff team is very enthusiastic about learning how to understand and support children. All staff have completed the home's mandatory training. In addition, they work with a life coach and speech and language therapist who are part of the team. When staff have identified that children have been anxious about moving on, they have used the advice given by the speech and language therapist to ensure children are communicated with in a way that will reduce their anxieties. The advice given by both is implemented with great effectiveness by staff. This specialist advice has contributed to positive outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers are excellent advocates for children. They support children to engage with the multidisciplinary team around them and express their views. Decisions are challenged when these are not made in the children's best interests. A few days before the inspection, a child moved in. Staff provided excellent support to the child, including extremely strong multi-agency engagement with professionals and family. Leaders and managers advocated for the child to be supported to return home with an additional support package in place, in the best interests of the child. These swift, inclusive actions meant that the child was able to successfully return home.

The home's model of care is fully understood by staff and underpins their practice. There is continual focus on reflection and learning to understand children's behaviour and the impact past trauma has had on them. This helps ensure that children and their needs are fully understood, and staff work diligently with children to help them feel secure and prepared to move forward.

Leaders and managers promote a strong culture of learning in the home. Oversight of the home is excellent. The two requirements made at the last inspection have been met. The highly effective monitoring systems ensure there is effective oversight of the quality of care provided for children. This approach has resulted in issues being quickly

identified and addressed. This limits any negative impact on the children and ensures improvements are continually made.

Feedback from professionals is incredibly positive. They describe the quality of care provided to children and communication from the home as 'excellent' and 'brilliant'. Professionals working with children who have moved out say that children continue to make notable progress and this is due to the support they received while living in the home.

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

### **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that all records are clear and detail the information in a concise and accurate way. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

### **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:** SC034480

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Norfolk County Council

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

**Responsible individual:** Lee Napper

**Registered manager:** Susan Lovelock

## Inspector

Syvanna Matthew, Social Care Inspector

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