

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	21/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC042978
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Lincolnshire County Council
Registered person address	Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, LINCOLN, LN1 1YL

Responsible individual	Janice Spencer
Registered manager	Margaret Nowland
Inspector	Tracy Murty

Inspection date	21/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection. This home was judged Outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. Children and young people continue to receive excellent care and support during their short break stays at this home. They have fun and learn independence skills. One parent commented: 'My son came home and made his own bed. He would never have done this before and it is down to the staff teaching him such skills. They are all amazing.' Children and young people learn basic independence skills, through clear and achievable targets being set by the staff team. One parent praised the staff for teaching their child to make their own breakfast. Staff take photos of such achievements to share with parents. There is a commendable focus by staff and managers on ensuring that children and young people not only have fun during their stays, but that they learn skills which will greatly assist them when they move on to adult service provisions. Children and young people take part in a wide range of fun and stimulating activities during their stays. Staff regularly take them out to local parks, shops, cinemas and trampoline clubs. A local organisation also visits the home to carry out music and art sessions regularly. As a result of such careful planning by staff, children and young people have opportunities to take part in activities, which they may not be able to otherwise. Some young people have been taking part in a nationally organised arts award project recently. Parents consistently praise the staff team for their exceptionally careful consideration of their children's needs and interests. A placing social worker commented: 'I have observed staff taking considerable time and patience in supporting one young person during mealtimes. They were absolutely 'fab' with them and I was really impressed with how calm and engaged the young person was.' Another key strength of this service relates to its excellent track record of working with a wide range of other agencies to plan for each child and young person and to review their care and support needs. A specialist nurse trainer commented: 'The staff team are excellent. They contact me for training and advice and have excellent skills in being able to manage complex health needs. They are proactive and always seek relevant advice and training to enable them to meet children's needs at all times.' A parent also stated how efficiently medication issues are dealt	

with in this home: 'The staff have very robust systems in place relating to medication storage and administration. I never have any concerns or worries about my child's complex health needs being met.'

Management monitoring and oversight of all aspects of the care and support provided to children and young people is excellent. The registered manager has made recent changes to internal monitoring report systems. Individual staff members now contribute fully to reports and provide pictorial evidence of how they have met needs and targets. Staff and managers continually strive to improve the care and support they provide and make improvements based on their findings. A parent stated: 'The planning and attention to detail to meet my child's needs by staff is 110%. They not only support my child, they have been a total lifeline to the whole family over the years and we cannot praise or thank them enough.'

There have been no recorded sanctions or use of physical restraint since the last inspection, or for some considerable time in this home. Staff understand the needs of children and young people extremely well and have the skills and competence to de-escalate situations and ensure their safety at all times. Parents report total confidence in their children being kept safe by staff at all times. Detailed risk assessments for both children and the environment provide further safeguards for them. There have no missing from care incidents since the last inspection, or for a considerable period of time in this home.

The registered manager is keen to share the excellent practices and systems she and her staff team use with other agencies and care providers. Since the last inspection, she has forged links with other short break providers and local authority social care services. She has given presentations to other agencies on how this service elicits the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people. She has provided mentoring support to other local authority short break providers, in order to assist their own improvement plans. This reflects the total commitment of the manager in sharing good practice and in enabling other providers to learn from the excellent practices of this service.

There is a strong learning ethos within the staff and management team to drive forward improvements and secure improved outcomes for children and young people. Staff have recently undertaken training on therapeutic crisis intervention. They also apply signs of safety principles to their care planning and review systems, as well as introducing social pedagogy principles. Such research driven practice enables staff to develop their skills and competences to a very high level and leads to improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people. This is evidenced by the comments of a parent: 'They look at every child's individual needs and stretch themselves as staff to the limit to make sure those needs are met and exceeded.'

The importance and value of this service to both children and their families is clear from the statement of one parent, who said: 'The home is amazing. We were very anxious about letting our child start short breaks at the start. I loved the home

from the moment I walked in and would strongly urge any parent to let their children go there. I cannot fault the service on any level. It changed our lives.'

No shortfalls have been identified as a result of this inspection and none were identified at the last inspection.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to five children and young people at any one time. It is owned and run by the local authority. The home provides short breaks for children and young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
17/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/11/2014	Full	Outstanding
24/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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