

SC042978

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have a learning disability.

At the time of the inspection, 4 children were living in the home. Three children were spoken to as part of the inspection.

The registered manager's post is vacant. However, an application to register with Ofsted is in progress.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 March 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	good
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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: 4 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2025	Full	Good
25/03/2024	Full	Good
09/11/2021	Full	Outstanding
06/01/2020	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The house is warm, welcoming and nurturing, with a strong family feel. Children's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their identity. Photos displayed around the home capture positive memories and show meaningful relationships children have with staff. Staff have shown exceptional sensitivity to children's emotional needs. For one child, who had gone a significant time without sleeping in a bed, staff worked hard to build trust carefully and created a bespoke truck bed. This helped the child feel safe and secure to enable them to now sleep in a bed each night.

Children make excellent progress because they receive highly individualised care from a committed and nurturing staff team. Feedback from professionals and family members is overwhelmingly positive. They consistently describe the manager and staff as going above and beyond to ensure that children and families feel heard, valued and supported. One parent said, 'It was the help and support from the staff and manager that enabled [the child] to make such significant progress. Due to this they are now able to return home.' Professionals also describe the quality of care provided by leaders and staff as outstanding.

Transitions for children leaving the home are exceptionally well planned and centred on children's needs, wishes and long-term success. For 2 children in particular, staff and the manager developed thoughtful bespoke plans that kept each child's voice at the centre of decision-making. This work has been phenomenal in supporting both children and their families. As a result, one child successfully moved into foster care, and another is returning home to their family. This careful planning has significantly enhanced children's lives and created positive opportunities for them to thrive.

Education is promoted and valued. All children are in education and making positive progress from their starting points. For one child, where education has been more difficult, the manager advocated effectively to ensure that a bespoke plan was put in place. This allowed the child to remain engaged in education while receiving the support they currently need. At the same time, staff and professionals have developed a clear plan to help the child transition back into mainstream education. This demonstrates a strong commitment to overcoming barriers and promoting achievements.

Work carried out with the children is meaningful, purposeful and consistently shaped by their wishes and feelings. Children's voices are captured regularly, and their progress is continually monitored to ensure that care remains aspirational and responsive. Key-work sessions are tailored to each child and delivered in creative ways that reflect their hobbies and interests. Staff respond with empathy, warmth and nurture, helping children to grow in confidence and develop trusting relationships. Staff provide music sessions and teach children how to play instruments consistently each week. This has improved children's confidence, their self-expression and their relationships with one another.

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

When children make allegations, leaders and staff respond immediately to safeguard children and staff. Managers have worked closely with relevant agencies to ensure that thorough investigations are completed. Practice remains child centred throughout, with children reassured, kept informed of outcomes and supported to feel safe. There is also a strong focus on learning, reflection and the repair of relationships between children and staff.

When physical intervention has been used, this has been as a last resort after other deescalation strategies have been exhausted. Staff use the least restrictive and least invasive approach possible. Following any incident, there is a strong emphasis on reflection and learning for the staff team. This is explored further in team meetings and supervision sessions so that staff can better understand children's needs and continue to develop effective de-escalation strategies. As result, there has been a significant and sustained reduction in the use of physical intervention.

Children benefit from a culture in which their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and valued. There have been no complaints made internally or externally in this period. Children understand how to raise concerns or make a complaint through regular key-work sessions and children's meetings. This helps to ensure that children know their voices matter and that they can speak up if they feel unhappy or worried.

Following safeguarding incidents, staff respond promptly and thoroughly to children's behaviours. Bespoke safety plans and meaningful pieces of work have been developed in partnership with the therapeutic team to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time. Staff have also completed creative and effective work around online safety supported by progressive safety plans. This has helped children develop a better understanding of risk and to manage this safely in a way that is appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

Missing-from-home incidents are rare, and there has been an overall reduction since the last inspection. Leaders and staff respond to any incidents with a clear and robust multi-agency approach. This ensures that children's safety remains the central focus. Following incidents, children are supported through meaningful education and creative direct work to help them understand risk and become more involved in their own safety planning. Staff also recognise that strong, trusting relationships and a good understanding of each child's individual needs are key protective factors in reducing the likelihood of children going missing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager's post has been vacant since May 2025. The appointed manager has applied to register with Ofsted and is waiting for her suitability to be assessed. During this period, the manager has created a strong culture of reflection and learning throughout the workforce. This has embedded high aspirations for children and a shared commitment from staff to continually improve practice and the support children receive.

There is a clear sense that leaders and staff do not become complacent and are always looking for ways to strengthen children's experiences and outcomes.

The manager knows the children and the staff team exceptionally well. She understands the strengths of the team and recognises areas for development. The manager leads from the front to promote an open and honest learning-focused culture. She is knowledgeable and works consistently in line with the therapeutic model of care. This approach is well embedded in practice because the manager role models expectations and sets a strong example for staff.

Managers advocate strongly for children and are unwavering in promoting what is in their best interests. This can be seen in the support provided around significant decisions and challenges in the children's lives. This included one child's move to foster care and the decisions around this, and the advocacy offered for one child following school exclusion, ensuring that this was revoked. This strong commitment to advocating for children helps to ensure that children receive the right support and that their needs remain central to professional planning.

Staff say they feel extremely well supported by managers. They describe an open-door culture and say they feel cared for and valued in their roles. Staff are confident in the guidance they receive, which helps them to grow in confidence and better support children. They know children well. They understand their individual needs and recognise the importance of building relationships and keeping children meaningfully engaged. Staff are also highly reflective and are always exploring new and innovative ways to support children.

There is a strong focus on staff development to ensure that children's needs are met effectively. Training is sourced in response to children's changing and individual needs. Team meetings and supervision sessions are used well to promote continual learning and development. This further strengthens reflective and trauma-informed practice. However, one staff member is outside the required timescale for achieving the required qualification. The manager is supporting this individual to make progress without any further delay.

There are safe and robust recruitment processes in place to help ensure that suitable adults work with children. Several staff have worked there for a long period of time. This provides children with valuable consistency, stability and security in their care. This strengthens relationships and contributes positively to their overall experiences.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

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: SC042978

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL

Responsible individual: Tara Jones

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Eleanor Quanbrough, Social Care Inspector

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