

Inspection report for children's home

---

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC042978        |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Tracy Murty     |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

---

|                                  |                                                                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Registered person</b>         | Lincolnshire County Council                                            |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices<br>Newland LINCOLN LN1 1YL |
| <b>Responsible individual</b>    | Janice Spencer                                                         |
| <b>Registered manager</b>        | Margaret Sarah Nowland                                                 |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b>   | 24/03/2014                                                             |

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b> | 24/11/2014 |
|------------------------|------------|

|                                          |               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Previous inspection                      | good progress |
| Enforcement action since last inspection | None          |

|                                        |                    |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>This inspection</b>                 |                    |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>           | <b>outstanding</b> |
| Outcomes for children and young people | outstanding        |
| Quality of care                        | outstanding        |
| Keeping children and young people safe | outstanding        |
| Leadership and management              | outstanding        |

## Overall effectiveness

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Judgement outcome | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------|--------------------|

Children form exceptionally strong and positive attachments to each other and the staff team during their short break stays in this home. For some children, this is their first time away from home. They enjoy a wide range of fun and stimulating experiences, which enhances their quality of life and confidence.

One parent stated, 'fantastic care, the home is outstanding in my opinion. It is a friendly, clean and safe environment to leave a child. I never worry about my child and know that the staff always keep them occupied. The home is amazing and provides families with a child with a disability a lifeline'.

The staff team ensure that all children have their complex health needs met, as part of their short break stays. Staff receive a wide range of training and development opportunities to ensure that they have the skills and competence to meet the health needs of children at all times. There are also very close and positive working relationships with other involved agencies, including doctors, nurses and mental health services. This provides continuity of care and support to both children and their parents at all times.

Children maintain their educational placements during their short break stays at this home. The staff work closely with schools to ensure that transport is in place and

known to parents and education providers. There is also excellent communication between the staff and schools to ensure that any issues are shared and resolved in a very timely manner.

Children enjoy excellent and imaginative social experiences, during their short break stays. Staff work exceptionally hard to identify activities and plan for each child's specific needs and interests. One involved agency stated, 'The whole home is warm and welcoming. There is evidence of young people's work and achievements all around for people to celebrate'.

Staff ensure that parents and carers receive detailed feedback following each stay about what their child has done. They also support young people exceptionally well in relation to their transition to adult service provision. A manager within social care services commented, 'the staff really do go above and beyond the call of duty to make sure that young people and their families get the very best support and preparation for their move to adult services. I cannot fault their commitment or dedication at any level'.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home provides short breaks for young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. It provides short breaks for up to five young people at any one time.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 24/03/2014      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 23/01/2014      | Full            | outstanding          |
| 24/01/2013      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 17/10/2012      | Full            | outstanding          |

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people make excellent progress in all aspects of their lives during their stays in this home. The staff team work extremely hard to ensure that young people's independence is encouraged and supported. They work with parents to identify any areas of need and address these. This has led to some young people learning new skills and taking part in some social activities for the first time. This has included young people learning to prepare basic meals, helping with laundry and attending the cinema for the first time.

Young people attend school during their short break stays. The staff ensure that each young person has transport in place prior to their stay to enable them to attend education during their short break. Parents report very high levels of satisfaction at how well the staff team support their children to feel confident and secure in these arrangements. Communication between schools, transport providers and parents is excellent and very well recorded. Staff have also visited some schools to meet with teaching staff recently to discuss some young people. This has led to increased awareness by the staff team of young people's needs and how best to meet them. Staff from the home have also worked with teaching staff to agree shared working practices in relation to setting and meeting targets for young people between both settings. Such attention to detail has resulted in some young people making significant progress in meeting targets in a very timely manner.

Young people do not engage in any risk-taking behaviours during their short break stays. This is attributable to the very high staffing ratios in the home and detailed understanding of the complex needs of the young people. Staff demonstrate a detailed awareness and understanding of each young person and how to meet their extremely complex needs. Over time, young people make exceptional progress to develop their skills and confidence.

Children and young people access a wide range of social activities during their stays in this home. For many, they are able to try out new things, which they may not be able to do elsewhere. This has included staff supporting children and young people to attend local trampoline clubs, cinemas, parks and swimming. Parents report significant improvements in their children and how much their lives have been enhanced from their time at this home. It also provides parents with the confidence to try out new things with their children on their return home, having seen how positively they engage with staff on new activities.

Children and young people acquire new skills during their stays. This includes their involvement with staff in meal preparation, housework and laundry tasks. They learn how to make choices and express their wishes and feelings. For some young people, this has included being able to express a preference for which bedroom they sleep in

during their stays. For others, it has included them trying out new food items and helping staff to prepare their own meals.

Children and young people have their complex health needs met to an exceptionally high level during their stays. Staff support them in all aspects of their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. Close and proactive work with involved health agencies ensures that children's global health needs are met at all times. Staff work with parents to ensure consistency of care in relation to feeding, bathing, medication and mobility issues. Children and young people present as very happy and relaxed with the staff team and in how they respond to their health needs at all times.

Children and young people are central to all aspects of how this home is run. Staff include them in all decisions relating to their care and ensure that they have choices and make contributions. This has included asking young people to contribute to choosing new carpets and curtains for the home. Staff presented some children with a selection of fabric samples and noted their reactions to them, as part of the process for re-decorating some areas of the home.

One social worker praised the staff team, 'they are always out and about with the children and young people. They do some amazing things with them and tailor the activities to each child. The home is full of photos and artwork reflecting what they do'.

## **Quality of care**

## **outstanding**

The staff team have consistently high aspirations for every child and young person who comes to stay. They prepare for each stay in great detail. This includes ensuring that bedrooms are personalised for each child. This includes bedding, toys, DVDs and other items being put in place for them before they arrive. The home employs a cook, who also demonstrates an exceptional knowledge of the children and their likes. The cook is involved in the daily handover meetings with the staff team. This enables the entire staff team to consider the needs and likes of each child and plan for their stay.

Staff take on key work roles and demonstrate an exceptional knowledge of and commitment to meeting the needs of each child. They work closely with other agencies to ensure the holistic needs of children and young people are met at all times. This has included visits to local schools and meetings with parents to ensure consistency of care. Some young people now benefit from having the same aids and equipment provided at the home, as they have in school and in the family home. This has led to increased security for some young people, as well as significant improvements in relation to their engagement at mealtimes and with feeding.

Staff demonstrate an impressive awareness of the verbal and non-verbal

communication methods used by children and young people. They tailor each stay to how a child presents on arrival and offer extremely flexible care and support. Due to the very high staffing levels, this enables a range of activities and support to be offered to meet children's individualised needs at all times. Targets are set as part of the short break care plans for each children and young person. Staff take great pride in celebrating the achievements of children and young people. Photographs of activities involving children and young people are on prominent display throughout the home. These are regularly changed, to reflect the numerous activities and events taking place on a daily basis in this home.

The staff team also use electronic devices such as tablets and other media systems to engage young people and reflect their experiences and achievements. Images of young people involved in activities are shown during looked after and children in need meetings held in the home. The staff team diligently take photos and keepsakes of each stay and present these at meetings. One placing social worker stated, 'the staff always come to meetings armed with loads of photos and details of what a young person has done. This really brings their stay to life for professionals and is lovely for the parents to see'.

Staff use various communication methods and systems in the home. This ensures that every child and young person can communicate or express their wishes and feelings at all times. The staff team also consider the needs of those children and their families, where English is not their first language. Information has been translated into other languages for parents. Correspondence has also been translated, including reports for review meetings. Parents find this attention to detail very comforting and it enables them to feel central to the care provided to their child. The staff team also ensure that photos are emailed to parents and shared with them regularly.

Staff have also sourced play materials and items for children from other countries and cultures who come for a short break stay. This provides children with sense of security and familiarity and is very well received by parents. Menu planning also fully takes into consideration the likes and diverse needs of each child and young person staying at the home. The staff team, including the home's cook, ensure that all dietary needs are fully met.

Short break care plans are all written in the first person. This attention to detail ensures that the voice and views of each child and young person are clear and transparent. All plans and risk assessments clearly reflect the individualised and complex needs of each child or young person. Staff ensure that they receive regular review and updates. Records reflect in great details the holistic needs of each child and how they should be met. Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to maintain the most accurate and relevant information for each child and young person.

A particular strength of the staff team is how well the staff work with parents and

involved agencies. This has provided children and young people with consistency of care between educational settings, home and the children's home. Staff pride themselves on considering the frequently changing needs of the children and in meeting them. This is particularly evident in relation to how their health needs should be met. Staff are in regular contact with health professionals to discuss and agree any planned changes to medication administration. Staff have also worked very closely to support parents in meeting the health needs of their children within the family home. Staff advocate not only for the children, but also for their parents.

The staff team also work closely and very positively with adult service providers and agencies. They have facilitated smooth and positive transitions for several young people recently. This has included supporting and accompanying young people on visits to new provisions and in providing practical and emotional support to parents. This has been greatly valued by parents, at a time of particular stress and change for them.

Parents feel able to raise any concerns or issues they may have with the staff team. Any complaints or concerns raised are dealt with in a very timely and thorough manner. The Registered Manager takes very seriously any issues raised by parents and responds to them exceptionally well. Records kept reflect the diligence of staff in resolving any issues of concerns and of excellent communication skills. The staff team make any necessary changes to short break care plans and risk assessments, based on feedback from parents and other agencies. These are reflected in the highly personalised records maintained for each child in the home.

### **Keeping children and young people safe    outstanding**

Each child and young person receives highly personalised and specific care, to meet their very complex needs. This ensures that they are protected from harm at all times, both within the home and when out with staff. Planning for external activities is extremely robust and prevents children and young people from being exposed to any risks.

Care plans and risk assessments reflect how children will be protected from harm by the staff team. Staff display an exceptionally detailed awareness and understanding of the needs of each child in their care. There have been no reported incidents of children or young people going missing during their short break stays at this home. Staffing levels and supervision are very high at all times, including during the night. Children and young people present as feeling very safe during their time at this home. Parents also consistently report having no concerns for the safety or welfare of their children during their short break stays. One parent stated, 'We have no worries about our child whilst they are there, and for the family of a severely disabled child, that is a valuable service'.

The use of physical restraint is very minimal in this home. Staff demonstrate a

detailed awareness of the needs and potential triggers for children and young people and use distraction and other techniques. Staff discuss the needs and potential triggers for children with their parents, placing social workers and involved agencies. This enables the staff team to respond calmly and to de-escalate any potentially concerning behaviours.

The recruitment and selection of staff in this home prevents any unsuitable people from working with such vulnerable children and young people. Any allegations or suspicions of harm are responded to by the Registered Manager quickly, fairly and effectively. Staff spoken with during this inspection demonstrated a very detailed awareness and understanding of procedures and processes to be followed.

Risk assessments and missing person information packs are maintained by the staff team and taken out on any planned trips. Staff have been provided with briefings on all relevant changes to legislation and guidance on missing from care issues. They clearly and consistently follow all policies and procedures to ensure the continuing welfare and safety of children and young people during their stays.

The home is extremely safe and secure, but maintains a very welcoming and homely atmosphere at all times. All visitors to the home are asked to sign in and provide identification and supported by staff during their visits. Children and young people receive exceptionally high staff support both inside the home and when out on trips and activities. Access to and from the building provides excellent security for children at all times. A parent who visited the home for the first time stated, 'I cannot get over how welcoming and homely it is. I thought it might be more institutionalised, but it's far from it. It feels safe but like a home'.

## **Leadership and management**

## **outstanding**

The Registered Manager has been in post for over five years. She has the skills, qualifications and experience necessary to perform the role. There have been no recorded complaints since the last inspection. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

The Registered Manager demonstrates extremely high levels of competence and dedication in her role. She has ensured that there is a very comprehensive and detailed development plan in place for the home. This clearly sets out the strengths and weaknesses of the home. It is regularly reviewed and updated by the management team, to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The home also has a very detailed and comprehensive Statement of Purpose in place. The staff team also produce guides for parents, children and young people in a format that meets their communication needs. Placing authorities report very high levels of satisfaction at how well the staff team and managers meet the aims and objectives set out in the Statement of Purpose. One placing social worker stated, 'the

staff always go above and beyond what they need to do for children and young people. They also fully support parents and carers outside of the short break provision in a very imaginative and flexible manner'.

The staff team demonstrate extreme care and diligence in relation to child in need and looked after review processes. They present detailed and comprehensive reports for all review meetings. They ensure that photographs are produced for review participants, showing all the activities the children have been involved in during their stays. If reviews take place within the home, they also present visual images of the child to ensure that all present focus on their needs. An independent reviewing officer stated, 'This is an excellent service. There is nothing the staff team could do better or differently in my opinion. They are well trained, reports are excellent and timely, they meet the needs of the children at all times and their parents'.

Staff have paid particular attention to meeting the diverse needs of all children accessing this short break provision. This has included staff researching food items, toys and communication methods for those children whose first language is not English. This has led to children having additional security and comfort during their stays. It has also led to parents feeling fully integrated and able to express their wishes and feelings with the staff team in their first language.

The home is maintained to an exceptionally high standard, both internally and externally. The staff team make great efforts to ensure that the home presents as homely and welcoming at all times for children and visitors. There is an abundance of photographs and information on display throughout the home. Bedrooms are highly personalised for each child and young person's stay to reflect their likes and needs.

The Registered Manager ensures that there is always a high staffing ratio for the children and young people using the provision. Staff receive excellent supervision, appraisals and training opportunities. One new member of staff stated how much they love their job, 'from day one, I have felt part of the family here and could not wish for better support or training from the managers and staff team'.

Records are exceptionally clear and detailed. They provide real meaning and value to any child or parent wishing to access them, now or in the future. Records reflect the extremely positive and close working relationships between the home and other involved agencies. The home works particularly closely with mental health services to ensure the emotional and psychological needs of children are met at all times. This has led to significant improvements for some children and also provided support to parents.

## What inspection judgements mean

| Judgement   | Description                                                                       |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outstanding | A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Good        | A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.                      |
| Adequate    | A service that only meets minimum requirements.                                   |
| Inadequate  | A service that does not meet minimum requirements.                                |

## Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.