

SC042994

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority home. It provides overnight short breaks for up to six children who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities, challenging behaviour and/or complex health needs.

The home is run by a manager who is suitably qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 January 2020

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: 3 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/09/2018	Full	Outstanding
14/08/2017	Full	Outstanding
17/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/08/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children who have a wide range of disabilities and complex needs have exceptionally positive experiences at the home. All children are treated as individuals, and the home and their bedrooms are set up according to their needs and personal preferences. Feedback from parents, carers and professionals is wholly positive. One social worker said, 'Children are valued and very well looked after.' A parent said, 'The staff really understand my child's needs. The care provided improved my child's independence, life skills and communication skills.'

Staff think creatively about providing positive experiences for children. For example, one child with complex disabilities was taken to the local leisure centre pool. This provided opportunities for the child's senses to be stimulated. Staff have also taught leisure centre reception staff basic sign language, so that they can say hello and welcome the children to the leisure centre. This is exceptional practice in engaging with the community and improving the experience for children.

Careful planning and thorough risk assessment mean that all children can enjoy outings and experiences that they may not get at home.

In the home there are a range of activities for children to enjoy. When planning for a child's stay, their likes and dislikes are fully considered. Staff prepare toys and activities and prepare the home with additional resources such as sensory lights and mats. Children are given choices wherever possible and have a wide range of toys and activities to choose from. All children have specific targets set for them and these link to targets set at home and in school. Activities and toys are used to support the children in working towards these targets, such as improving fine motor skills.

Children have a large outdoor space to play in and explore. They have helped to create a sensory garden area. Some of the children made their own small gardens and decorated these to their own personal tastes.

When visiting and staying at the home, children are encouraged to develop their independence and their social skills. Careful care planning means that children can enjoy activities and experiences together. One child who was moving on to semi-independent living was given extensive support in developing their own sense of identity and their independence skills. The social worker said, 'It made a big difference to her life. She really blossomed while here and it made it so much easier to find a new place for her because of what the staff had done.'

Although not all children are verbal, staff use their skills and knowledge to capture the voice of the child. Social pedagogy is used throughout the home and all paperwork is written in the voice of the child. A 'Hear my voice, help me shine' board in the home is a reminder of when children have made choices and had their voices heard. It also captures how staff have responded to the children.

Children are cared for by a team that knows them well and genuinely cares about them. Staff know the children very well and are skilled in reading their non-verbal

communication. This allows staff to respond swiftly to the needs of the children to ensure that their visits to the home are positive.

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

Children's safety in the home is well managed. This is supported through high staffing levels and detailed risk assessments and behaviour support plans. Parents and schools are consulted with regarding these plans. This means that children are cared for in a consistent and predictable way. Detailed planning minimises the risks posed to all children accessing the service.

Staff are trained in a variety of de-escalation and support techniques. Despite the high level of challenging behaviour, the use of physical intervention is low and, when used, is appropriate and only used as a last resort. The home's preferred model of practice is well embedded within the team. The model of care is used to good effect in debriefs with staff and children following any incident.

Any safeguarding concerns are monitored and managed appropriately. A new system is in place to record and evaluate any safeguarding concerns. The findings from this analysis are shared with the staff team and, as a result, staff have developed their knowledge. This has improved the recording of concerns, however small, and has led to a better understanding of safeguarding vulnerable children.

All children have a safeguarding plan that is regularly reviewed. This plan details any known behaviour that may lead to injuries such as the child hitting themselves. Any concerns are recorded, shared and discussed with social workers and parents where appropriate. This has led to additional support and resources being in place to safeguard children.

Children are cared for in a safe environment. The children accessing the service have highly complex needs and a range of disabilities, and the physical environment can be adapted accordingly. For example, each child has a night care plan in place and bedrooms and routines are set up according to this. This means that children have resources and support in place that keep them safe overnight.

Each child has a specific fire evacuation plan which details the support each child would need. These plans are easily accessible and form part of the handover each day. Staff are trained in specific procedures to move children quickly and safely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is ambitious, supportive and inspirational in leading and developing the home and the team. Staff are well supported and confident in their roles. Succession planning in the home is good, with staff taking on additional roles and responsibilities to develop their skills and knowledge. This means that the home is organised and well managed by senior staff in the home.

Staff feel confident to bring new ideas into the home. These ideas have had a positive impact on parents, carers and children. For example, a social media group has been set up for parents and staff at the home. Photographs, events and information is shared via

this group. Parents use the group as a way of communicating and meeting other parents accessing the service. Parents and professionals now have a newsletter from the home. This details recent events with lots of photographs, news and updates and, recently, details of the social pedagogy model and how this is used with the children in the home.

Staff receive an extensive training package which includes specific training from health professionals. Staff have the skills and knowledge to manage the complex health needs of the children. Staff are also encouraged to do their own research in practice and to share this with the team. They are committed and caring, and staff practice is entirely child centred. One parent said, 'Staff are committed and children have a happier time because of this.' Staff have a sense of pride in what they do and are proud of each other and the children at the home. This means that morale is very high in the team.

The manager has formed excellent links with a local college and has delivered training to students. This has led to some students being offered work experience opportunities at the home. Students are given the opportunity to see what excellent care looks like and the chance to raise their own expectations in relation to future work in the sector. This is progressive thinking from the manager in the development of future care workers.

The manager has good systems in place for monitoring and reviewing the quality of care in the home. Parents and professionals are regularly consulted with. Where there have been concerns, practice has been adapted and changes made. The manager is reflective and knows the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There is a continuous plan and desire to improve the home and the service that children and parents receive.

A new parent pack has been developed. This is written in simple terms and details clearly all the important things that parents need to know about the home. This pack contains a photographic introduction to the key worker. An 'All about me' document is included. This allows parents and carers to detail all the child's likes and dislikes, routines, known behaviour and responses to this. Further information about bullying and safeguarding is provided. The whole pack is inclusive and written in a child-friendly manner so that parents and carers can share this information with the child wherever possible.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC042994

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Janice Spencer

Registered manager: Theresa Clarke

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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