

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	12/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC042994
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	Theresa Clarke
Inspector	Tracy Murty

Inspection date	12/02/2016
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. This short break service continues to provide excellent standards of care and support for children and young people. Staff work exceptionally hard to ensure that they have fun and experience new things during their short break stays. Such commitment is supported by the services of a local charitable organisation, who visit the home to provide activities. These have recently included circus skills, music sessions and messy play. Photos show how much enjoyment such activities bring to the children and young people. For some, these are experiences they may not otherwise have the chance to take part in. They provide them with new, fun and stimulating experiences. Managers have excellent systems in place to monitor and oversee all aspects of the care provided. They motivate the staff team to continually strive to improve the care and support provided. Achievable targets are set for each child or young person during their stays, with staff using imaginative and sensitive means to support them in achieving them. There is an increased focus on incorporating identified education targets during short break stays. Managers have worked closely with looked after children education services in the county to secure information on each child's or young person's educational histories. This demonstrates the strong learning ethos of staff and managers and their desire to ensure that each child's and young person's needs are fully known and met. A particular strength of the home is in how well it supports those children and young people admitted in emergency situations. Staff and managers display a commendable sensitivity to ensuring that such placements fully consider not only the child's or young person's needs but also in supporting family members. As one parent stated: 'The staff have been absolutely brilliant. Not only have they enabled my child to settle in really well and quickly, they have also supported me fully at a very difficult time. I cannot thank them enough for what they do.' Staff and managers have also shown real commitment to ensuring continuity of support and care for those admitted on an emergency basis. This is particularly evident in relation to supporting and maintaining the educational placement for	

one young person. The placing social worker stated: 'I cannot thank the staff and managers enough. They went well above and beyond their roles in acting as escort for my young person in the taxi. This enabled them to continue attending school, while education colleagues sorted out more permanent plans. Without the staff here, this young person may not have been able to attend school.'

Staff and managers know the children and young people exceptionally well and meet their very complex health and social care needs to a consistently high level. A specialist nurse trainer commented: 'The staff are skilled, competent and tailor-make care plans to meet the needs of every child. They are a pleasure to work with and I have absolute confidence in their skill and commitment.'

The home is presented to a very high standard, both internally and externally. A sign for the home, designed by one of the young people, is now on display at the entrance. Work is also underway to improve the internal hallways. Staff, children and young people have agreed a theme and designed new child-friendly paintwork, leading to a homely and welcoming feel. This also reflects the commitment of staff and managers in including children and young people in all aspects of the care they receive and the environment in which they stay.

There have been no complaints recorded since the last inspection or for some considerable time before that. This reflects the confidence family members and others have in staff and managers resolving any low-level issues which may arise. There is a strong focus on making each stay happy and memorable, with the use of physical restraint and sanctions being minimal. Records detail all aspects of how care will be provided. This includes exceptionally detailed risk assessments, care plans and routine sheets. Staff and managers regularly audit case files to ensure that they remain relevant.

An independent reviewing officer stated: 'The staff go above and beyond their roles to ensure that children have a positive and enjoyable stay. I never receive any complaints from parents or family members. A parent for one young person who has been accessing this service for several years commented: 'I can only say positive things about this home. They have been a life saver for our family, and our child loves coming and has such a good time during their stays. This means the world to our family.'

One requirement was set as a result of the last inspection. Managers have now considered the emergency admissions policy and made amendments to it and the statement of purpose. As a result of this, there is more clarity and focus on ensuring that such admissions reflect the relevant legal status and longer-term needs of each child or young person admitted. No shortfalls have been identified as a result of this inspection.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to six 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
19/10/2015	Full	Outstanding
28/01/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
11/06/2014	Full	Adequate
17/02/2014	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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