

# SC042994

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks for up to six children with learning disabilities. Four children were staying at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager is registered with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 28 and 29 July 2025

|                                                                                           |                    |
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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

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:** 25 June 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 25/06/2024      | Full            | Good                   |
| 31/10/2023      | Full            | Good                   |
| 09/05/2022      | Full            | Good                   |
| 17/03/2022      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children continue to enjoy their short break stays at the home. There were four children present at the time of the inspection. All four children engaged with or spoke to the inspector. Children were relaxed, happy and smiling.

Children's relationships and interactions with all staff are joyous and respectful. There is lots of fun and laughter. The compassionate staff enjoy working in the home and all walk around with smiles on their faces, which creates a positive happy environment. Staff know and understand these children extremely well. One mother said, 'I trust the team, they all cluck over him, he doesn't even look back at me when I drop him off, he rushes inside and is gone!'

Children's progress, experiences, wishes and views are central to their care and well understood and used as the foundation to develop very high-quality wraparound care during their stays. The team uses creative ways to ensure children are consistently listened to, and their views are acted on whenever possible. One member of staff, using research-informed practice, has created and developed children's consultations and how to get their feedback following stays at the home. These consultations are bespoke for each child, including those who are non-verbal or have difficulties communicating. They are regularly reviewed and the children's feedback is acted on to improve their stays. This practice is worthy of wider dissemination.

Children are encouraged and given opportunities to develop their social, physical, educational and independence skills, appropriate to their age and development. This includes taking age-appropriate and well-managed risks. Staff are confident in supporting children to access community facilities and have new experiences. This enables children to flourish in all areas of development and supports them to grow in self-esteem and develop self-confidence in their abilities.

Children receive exceptional support and assistance when they turn 18 and move on to adult services. One child planned their 18th birthday party, which was full of lovely surprises, and their social worker was able to attend. They made a 'speech' at the end of their party thanking everyone for coming. The staff are dedicated to ensuring a smooth transition for children, especially during significant changes like moving on to adult services. They help minimise the stress and confusion that can often accompany such moves. The manager and staff demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the children and go above and beyond to continue to provide emotional support once children move on. They do this because they understand the gravity of such life-changing experiences.

There is excellent communication between the managers and staff, family members, friends and external professionals. Staff understand the value for children of these important relationships when they are away from home. This enables children to

maintain positive relationships with people who support them. Parents spoke very highly of the staff and the exceptional communication and care shown to their children.

The home has recently been modernised both internally and externally. It is homely, with a good standard of decor and furnishings, and has colourful areas for children to enjoy, such as the sensory room. Staff take pride in making the house a home. Staff ensure children develop a sense of belonging and stability during their stay. Children's rooms are personalised before they arrive for their short stay. The gardens are vibrant in colours and textures, along with calming and quiet areas. This supports children to settle when they arrive. The home environment reflects that children are valued and cared for.

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

Staff are extremely diligent. They are vigilant and responsive, and their professional curiosity is strong. This ensures that any potential risks to children are understood and minimised. Risk assessments and care plans are extremely thorough. They provide clear and concise information about how children need to be supported. Staff know and understand the underlying causes of more complex emotions that children can present with. Children's risk assessments and plans are informative, reflective and current. Approaches to children's care and plans are altered to reflect their changing needs.

Medication systems and processes are well structured and individualised to meet each child's specific needs. Staff receive the necessary training and assessments to ensure they are confident and competent in this area. They also receive bespoke, robust training which is tailored to the needs of the children. The emphasis on providing staff with regular specialised training ensures they are both knowledgeable and confident in administering medication safely. One child who will be turning 18 is being shown how to safely administer, count and be responsible for their own medication. This level of care and attention to detail helps create an environment where children's physical health is closely monitored and supports children's independence in looking after their own well-being.

Children's safety is a priority for staff. Individual care and support plans are discussed in daily handovers by the team. This supports staff to be attuned and responsive to the risks that are present for children individually and as a group when they arrive for their short stays. Effective safeguarding practice has created a safe and supportive environment where the children feel secure. The manager has fostered an open culture that prioritises transparency, accountability and continuous improvement following any incidents, and lessons are learned. This helps to create an environment where children are protected from harm and supported to thrive.

Staff have received good-quality safeguarding training. As a result, they have a clear understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Staff discuss safeguarding issues in team meetings, giving them opportunities to reflect on specific safeguarding issues. Training is developed by the management team and research-informed practice supports staff to be focused on sustained improvements to the care, support and safeguarding needs of children.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The manager is inspirational and has grown in her confidence to build on the home's ethos and be influential in ensuring children on short breaks are not just having fun but growing, developing and progressing on their own journey in life. Her leadership creates a positive child-focused environment that supports staff and enhances the experiences of children in her care. She leads with a strong vision and continues to create a positive culture in the home. The staff team shares the manager's vision for the home, to ensure that all children have the best possible experiences and providing excellent child-centred care.

There is a stable staff team. Staff say they are very happy at work. They are invested in the children's care and short breaks. Staff say they feel supported and have confidence in the manager. They are supported to develop and grow. Staff use research-led practice to inform their work and support children's development. The team's approach is consistently exceptional, with a shared ethos that promotes bespoke experiences tailored to each child's social, emotional, physical and educational development. This solid foundation creates a strong positive team who are all consistent about providing good quality care to children.

All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the children, regardless of their specific roles or responsibilities. For example, the cook takes time to understand and know each child's eating and drinking preferences, ensuring their needs are met with care. The handyman employed at the home has used initiative to research optimal environments that support children's sensory development and is creating a vegetable patch, giving children the opportunity to grow their own produce. The staff team works tirelessly to create a positive, nurturing environment. Staff consistently apply their knowledge, skills and experience in a compassionate and responsive manner, ensuring each child feels valued and supported during their stay.

A key strength of the home is the way the manager promotes learning and development of the team. Staff are supported to develop and grow. Staff access a range of bespoke training essential to the individual needs of the children. Research-informed practice underpins the work with children in this home. This means that children receive care from a highly skilled, reflective and knowledgeable team.

Partnership work and collaboration with external agencies and families is a strength of this home. This approach promotes the full involvement of families and professional networks around the child. Social workers and family members commended the manager and staff on the good communication and the high quality of care provided. A common thread in feedback is the positive communication and how happy children are having a short break. One social worker said, 'All children and young people should have [name of home] in their life to make it joyous!'

## **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:** SC042994

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Lincolnshire County Council

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

**Responsible individual:** Tara Jones

**Registered manager:** Victoria Cooke

## Inspector

Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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