

SC043255

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority and provides care for up to six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home's statement of purpose states that the home can provide care for children with mild learning difficulties.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably qualified and experienced.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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: 27 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
17/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
04/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
03/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make excellent progress in all areas of their lives. They receive highly personalised care. The staff team is dedicated and committed, and goes above and beyond in supporting children. Staff place the children at the centre of their care practice. Staff speak about the children with fondness and respect and provide warm and nurturing care. This helps children to build strong relationships and lasting bonds with the staff. The children's social workers are universal in their praise of the staff. They commented that staff 'always put the children first' and that they 'strive to achieve the best and strongly advocate for children'.

Children attend education provisions that are specific to their needs. They are making very good progress with their education. For example, one child was recently awarded pupil of the year for their achievements and engagement with learning. This child also benefited from attending a five-day residential trip with school. The staff work well with schools and support the children with transitions from home to school. Children are always ready for school on time because staff prepare them for their school day, as any good parent would. This helps children to settle at school, enjoy it and achieve.

Children's health needs are well met. The staff have a good understanding of the factors that may affect children's physical and emotional health. For one child, the manager has advocated for specialist therapeutic support. Additionally, a designated staff member has been available to support the child while they undertake therapy. This provides the child with stability from a consistent and trusted adult, during what could be a difficult period. The designated looked after children's nurse is a regular visitor to the home. They provide extra help to staff and children and can provide the health advice and guidance children need.

Children take part in a wide range of activities. They are provided with opportunities to develop their confidence and learn new skills. This enables children to integrate into the wider community and helps them develop confidence and social skills. Children have taken part in fundraising activities for national charities, including a 26-mile sponsored walk. Staff, with specific training, have taken children on adventure holidays and undertaken a survival activity week. This teaches children about the importance of teamwork and healthy lifestyles, and helps them to develop practical skills, such as camping.

Children enjoy going on holidays with staff. These are fun and help develop the strong bonds between children and staff. Staff go out of their way to make sure children have interesting days out that link to their individual hobbies and interests.

Children's confidence increases through taking part in local clubs, such as army cadets, dance and gymnastics. These activities give children opportunities to

develop new skills and expand their friendships. A kindness project is helping children to develop awareness of being kind to others. This supports children to understand the importance of their own emotional well-being and the impact they have on others.

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

Children's risk assessments are clear, detailed and personalised. Staff understand children's risks and vulnerabilities, and have a range of strategies to manage these risks. Staff know and understand the children very well. They are highly skilled in de-escalating incidents and managing children's behaviour. Research-informed practice underpins the work that staff carry out with children. The manager makes sure that staff understand what the research means and how to instil this in their care practice.

The management of allegations and safeguarding concerns is excellent. The manager has strong links with the local authority designated safeguarding officer and social workers. Allegations are treated very seriously. They are well documented and reported in line with policies and procedures. The manager has worked with external agencies to develop a plan for children who routinely make unfounded allegations when distressed. This plan ensures that the voice of the child is heard and the child is responded to appropriately. The reparation of relationships between the child and staff following any incident is a priority.

For some children, incidents have significantly decreased. This is because children are supported to understand their feelings and emotions. Children learn more effective ways of managing feelings that overwhelm them. Children do not leave home unauthorised. The use of physical restraint to manage children's behaviour is always a last resort. Children are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour following any incidents. Staff help children to identify other ways of communicating their feelings when angry or upset. Staff have built strong and trusting relationships with the children, and they provide clear and consistent boundaries, which support children to feel safe and cared for.

Staff have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. If concerns are identified, staff act quickly to eradicate such behaviour. Children are taught how to respect each other and they learn about tolerance and acceptance of others. Children use their 'chill and chat' meetings with staff to consider and discuss relevant issues. Bullying, respecting each other and use of language are some of the areas covered in these meetings. Consequently, the home has a culture of acceptance and valuing the differences in everyone.

Children are provided with a safe and homely environment. They are supported to develop age-appropriate skills, such as walking to the local town and engaging in forest school activities.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager provides strong and effective leadership. She is well supported by the senior staff team. The manager is passionate, inspirational and committed to the children. The management team has high expectations and aspirations for children and staff alike. Managers are good role models and place the children very much at the heart of the home. Research-informed practice is thoroughly embedded in staff practice. This permeates throughout the ethos and culture of the home and care practice.

The staff have access to a wide range of training and development opportunities. Additional training from an external agency has been carried out with staff, around the impact of trauma and attachment on children's emotional health needs. The manager has also provided training workshops, which have focused on specific health conditions and medical diagnoses. This provides staff with an understanding of how these conditions may affect children, including the difficulties that individual children may face and how best to support them.

The manager has strong links with external agencies and works well with multi-disciplinary teams. Regular risk-management meetings are held with a range of external professionals to identify strategies and any additional resources required. This means that all agencies work together and agree the best way to support the children.

The manager has excellent monitoring systems in place. This helps the manager to have a good understanding of the progress children make. The manager is a reflective practitioner. She uses this skill to identify learning points and adapt routines and working practices to meet the needs of children. As a result, children receive highly personalised care. This improves children's outcomes and engagement.

The manager produces extremely detailed and comprehensive reports on children's progress and the overall effectiveness of the home. Staff members contribute to these reports, which highlight the journey of each child and the progress they are making. Reports are supplemented with photographs and profiles that show how children are engaging with staff and becoming happier and more settled.

Systems are in place to regularly seek feedback from children, social workers, parents and carers, and other professionals. Children have a clear voice and are encouraged to attend the local children-in-care meetings. One child has recently been given the opportunity to join the Young Inspectors group. They will visit other homes and give feedback to them about the quality of care provided in that home. This means children have opportunities to express their views, wishes and feelings, which helps them to feel valued and heard.

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: SC043255

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Janice Spencer

Registered manager: Katherine Sansom

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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