

SC043732

Registered provider: Lincolnshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home looks after children on a long-term basis. All the children accommodated have an identified disability and/or a complex health or medical need. The children are usually aged between nine and 18 years of age, although they can stay beyond their 18th birthday for a short period when necessary. The home, which is a single storey new building, can accommodate 11 children when it is fully operational.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 April 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2017	Full	Good
07/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/09/2016	Full	Good
07/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	31/05/2018
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c))	31/05/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home. This is with reference to having a formal system for obtaining feedback from

professionals and other interested parties. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress as a result of consistent, individualised care and support. This progress is particularly evident in their social interactions, tolerance of changes and improved behaviour.

Staff know the children well, they care about them and they have a good understanding of their needs. They demonstrate pride in the children's achievements and they are committed to helping the children have positive outcomes. One social worker commented: 'Staff look after each child as an individual and go the extra mile.'

The planning for children coming into and leaving the home is good. A social worker commented on the admission process for her child, saying: 'The managers were so helpful and very clear about what they wanted. He moved in a very planned manner. It has been amazing.' When young people are nearing 18 years of age, there is good communication with adult services to progress the planned move to different accommodation. Staff prepare young people well, using social stories and pictorial information about the new home. Information sharing and good planning promote children's and young people's ability to settle into a new environment and have their needs met in a safe way.

Children have regular contact with their parents, when this has been assessed as being in their best interests. Parents are made welcome, have regular communication with staff at the home, and are supported so that their relationship with their child improves. This is a strength of this home.

The voice of the child is very important and staff are keen to respond positively to children's expressed and implied wishes and feelings. Managers are in the process of implementing a new system to make it easier to see the impact of the voice of the child. Social pedagogy is gradually becoming embedded into practice to enhance the child-centred ethos of the home. In addition, an advocate visits the home on a monthly basis to get to know the children and ensure that they are being listened to.

Not all the children are attending school regularly. However, staff are using detailed strategies to address this and they are working in partnership with the school and other professionals to see how they can bring about improvements to this situation.

Staff encourage children to develop their interests. However, because the building is not completed, some facilities are not available currently, such as parts of the garden, the sensory room and the ball pool. Children are not accessing community facilities very often, in part because they have been assessed as needing two members of staff with them in the community and this has not been possible to arrange. Consequently, their

experiences are not as wide-ranging as they could be, and activities that they enjoy, such as swimming, are limited in frequency.

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

Children are safe in this home because the manager and staff have a good understanding of risk management. Risk assessments are comprehensive and clear and provide staff with the necessary guidance to reduce risks, including those to staff, other children and the children themselves.

Managing behaviour is a significant aspect of this home due to the varying challenges that the children pose. Staff do this well through creative plans that are regularly reviewed and evaluated, and by working in partnership with other professionals. A child and adolescent mental health professional commented on one child, saying: 'He has made huge steps and his behaviour has now reduced because of the robust plans. Staff have tried every behavioural approach possible and there has been good communication with us.'

All incidents are recorded and the records are scrutinised regularly by the management team. There is evidence of challenge and reflection to improve practice. Physical intervention and sanctions are used sparingly and appropriately. All staff have regular training in managing behaviour. The approach used emphasises distraction and diversion whenever possible. This promotes an environment where children's behaviour improves, they are kept safe and positive relationships flourish.

Staff have a good understanding of the vulnerabilities of the children for whom they care. They are attuned to changes in presentation and behaviour and understand that these may be indicators of distress. Although there have been no child protection allegations, staff have regular training so that they know what to do if they have any concerns.

Staff recruitment is robust. The manager has developed a good system to ensure that any gaps in employment history are explored and that appropriate references are sought and any concerns explored. This prevents unsuitable people from having access to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is well managed by an experienced and suitably qualified registered manager and an assistant manager, who together provide good support and leadership to the staff team. The management team is child focused and passionate about improving outcomes for children. This ethos is echoed by the staff team. Managers and staff know the children very well. They are extremely committed to providing the best service possible.

The staff are knowledgeable and skilled and they feel well supported. The management team has developed an evidence-based induction, which is a particularly good piece of

work to help new staff develop their confidence and skills. Staff competence is further enhanced by access to relevant training, team meetings and supervision. However, formal monthly supervision has been difficult to sustain recently, and although managers are accessible for 'catch-ups', this does not enable staff to have the time they need to reflect fully on their practice.

Partnership working is good and effective in promoting positive outcomes. For example, a professional from the child and adolescent mental health service said: 'I am impressed with how well we work together. This is based on mutual trust. Staff are proactive and ask for help and advice.' This ensures that all the relevant professionals are working consistently, sharing relevant information and progressing plans for the benefit of the child.

Managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the home and they have identified strategies to implement the changes. However, the manager has not developed the service at the pace she hoped for because various factors have affected the speed of change. These include the impact of the building work, recruiting staff to meet the increased capacity of the home, and the needs of the children.

Monitoring is generally good. However, there is no formal system for obtaining feedback from stakeholders. This has the potential to limit the effectiveness of service development as independent information to inform the monitoring may be lost.

The children's case records do not provide an up-to-date account of the work that is undertaken. For example, some monthly summaries had not been completed recently, and some records were not signed or dated, which limits accountability.

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: SC043732

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Janice Spencer

Registered manager: Deborah Bond

Inspector

Ros Chapman, social care inspector

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