

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	06/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC398253
Type of inspection	Full
Registered provider	North Lakes Children's Services Limited
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider address	Rayrigg Show Rooms, Rayrigg Road, Windermere LA23 3DN

Responsible individual	Anthony Middleton
Registered manager	Michael Dodd
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	06/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC398253

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people receive a good level of individual attention, as staffing levels in the home are high.
- The relationships between staff and young people are positive. Staff spend time getting to know young people, developing trust and providing young people with positive care experiences.
- The young people currently in placement are relatively settled and are therefore making good progress, with fewer incidents of challenging behaviour.
- All young people attend a local school which is run by the same company. Young people have good attendance. Their educational and career aspirations are well supported.
- Young people participate in a good range of activities. They are encouraged and supported to develop hobbies and interests, as well as to develop social skills, through joining local clubs.
- Young people's safety is prioritised, and under very difficult circumstances staff show skill and tenacity in maintaining safety.
- While staff do not easily 'give up' on young people, managers do recognise when a placement can no longer meet a young person's needs or keep them safe, and they end placements when it is in a young person's best interests for them to do so.
- Young people's full range of needs are met through the company's own nurse, pathways adviser and, more recently, a therapeutic lead. These professionals also provide staff with suitable advice and support, resulting in high staff morale.
- Staff are well trained and their professional development is promoted through training and progression opportunities.
- The registered manager has a very good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and benefits from high-quality external monitoring to support internal monitoring processes.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff, seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. Specifically, the child's placing authority must be consulted about any changes to a child's behaviour management plan that the home considers necessary. (Regulation 5(a))	26/10/2016
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person must ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(2)(c)(i))	26/10/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- 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. Specifically, all staff must be supervised in line with the home's stated frequency. ('Guide to

the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider who has a small number of other children's homes in the locality. It provides a service for up to five young people between the ages of 12 and 17. The home cares for young people with learning disabilities as well as those who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/01/2016	Full	Good
16/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/09/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The four young people currently resident at the home are all settled and making good progress. Two have been admitted since the last inspection and their admissions have been well planned, which has resulted in smooth, positive transitions. The home has experienced a challenging period since the previous full inspection, with two placement breakdowns having a significant impact both on the young people and the staff. The home has carefully considered the termination of placements, and decisions to end a placement are evidence based and proportionate. High staffing ratios allow for young people's individual needs to be met, and over the summer holiday period the young people benefited from very good levels of individual attention. Staff develop positive relationships with young people due to the amount of time they spend together. One example is a short holiday which was thoroughly enjoyed by two of the young people. Young people enjoy engaging in activities with staff because they have positive relationships with them. This positive interaction enhances their social development. Young people are also encouraged and supported to attend local groups and clubs to promote their inclusion and help them to develop positive peer relationships. Young people benefit from a wide range of professional support. Their health needs are met by a nurse employed by the company who liaises closely with the wider health systems to ensure that complex health needs are addressed. A pathways adviser engages with individual young people to prepare them for moving on, and a lead therapist works both with staff and young people to ensure that young people's therapeutic needs are met. Placement plans are well considered and fully cover young people's needs in all areas. Changes to the format and content further ensure that these documents are relevant, based on evidence and function as a live tool for planning for young people and monitoring their progress. Young people report positively about their experiences at the home and say that they feel listened to. Some further work could be done in this area to ensure that key-worker sessions are recorded frequently and in depth, and that young people's meetings take place monthly, as stipulated in the home's statement of purpose.	

The home is generally well maintained, and all communal areas are decorated and furnished to a high standard. Some young people's bedrooms require attention to be brought up to the same standard as the rest of the home, for example, mould in shower trays needs addressing and broken drawers need replacing.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people at this home can display some highly challenging and complex behaviours relating to their diagnosed conditions and past experiences. All young people have comprehensive risk assessments that cover all areas of risk affecting them, and plans aimed at reducing those specific risks. Risks for most young people reduce from their point of placement. However, for some young people risks have increased since the last inspection, and for two young people the increase in risks has led ultimately to termination of their placements. Staff and managers at the home are consistent in implementing behaviour management strategies, and they undertake extensive work with young people around risk management and risk-taking behaviours before placements are considered too unsafe to continue. For young people who go missing from home, there are individual plans in place with clear procedures set out for staff to follow. For young people who are especially vulnerable due to their health needs, staff go to great lengths initially to prevent them from going missing and then to locate them when they do go missing. The home conducts its own return interviews for children who have gone missing to help them understand the reason and put further measures in place to prevent recurrence. Most young people also have independent return interviews arranged by their placing authorities. Restrictive physical intervention is used in this home because of the highly challenging behaviours shown on occasions by some young people. Physical interventions are clearly recorded and their use is considered to be necessary and proportionate. For young people who are restrained in a way that has not been previously agreed in their plan, the home must ensure that this is reviewed and plans amended in consultation with their placing authority. The home has clear plans in place which allow young people to progress to having free time in the community as their risks reduce. This serves to motivate young people to conform to boundaries, regulate their own behaviour and make positive choices. Sanctions are in use for some young people. These are reviewed for effectiveness	

and plans are amended as necessary.

Some young people at this home are highly vulnerable to bullying, while others are perpetrators of bullying. Staff are alert and vigilant to signs of bullying and take action when incidents of bullying occur. One young person persistently reported being a victim of bullying at school and the home worked closely with the school (as well as external agencies) to monitor and manage this effectively.

The home works proactively with the police and with other agencies to address risks to young people. Restorative work has been undertaken with police support when young people have seriously assaulted staff, and this helps them to understand the impact of their behaviour on others without their becoming criminalised.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home's manager has suitable qualifications and experience to lead the home. Young people's outcomes are clearly the priority, and both managers and staff show commitment to ensuring that they progress and have positive opportunities. The home advocates on young people's behalf, when necessary, to ensure that their needs are met. Staffing levels are high at the home and the young people benefit from a consistent staff team. Staff morale is high due to a culture of support and opportunities to develop. Most staff receive regular supervision although, at times of crisis in the home and when key staff have been absent, supervision levels have declined because managers have been supporting staff on care shifts. A recommendation is made in this area to ensure that supervision is provided in line with the home's stated levels. Informal supervision takes place very frequently and staff report a highly supportive working environment. The staff team are suitably vetted and competently deliver a high quality service to the young people. A comprehensive training package, which is specific to the young people, is in place, and further enhances the staff's skills and ability to meet the young people's needs to a high standard. Staff are generally clear about their accountability, but further work is planned in this area to strengthen their understanding and ensure that they have a shared ownership of practice. Team meetings and handover meetings are used as a forum for staff to work together to address challenging issues and to provide the young people with a consistent approach.	

Multi-agency working is promoted and the home has good links with external partners. Planning for admissions involves close liaison with young people's previous placements and a thorough review of a wide range of information about a young person. Likewise, when a young person moves out of the placement, the home is diligent in ensuring that all information is shared with the identified placement.

External monitoring of the home is rigorous and assists the manager in maintaining high standards. Internal monitoring activity also takes place regularly, which results in the manager having a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. There are clear plans in place to address areas of weakness.

The home is delivering effective care in line with its statement of purpose.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 that 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 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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