

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC398253
Inspector	Gillian Walters
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	North Lakes Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	Kirby Moor School Longtown Road Brampton Cumbria CA8 2AB
Responsible individual	Anthony Middleton
Registered manager	Michael Dodd
Date of last inspection	25/09/2014

Inspection date	16/02/2015
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Previous inspection	outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

Young people living in this home make considerable progress in relation to their starting points often having experienced periods of extreme vulnerability or risk-taking behaviour before coming to the home. They live in an environment that strives to help them make sense of their histories and move positively forward in their lives, significantly reducing those behaviours that previously caused high levels of concern. Staff show exceptional commitment and compassion in supporting young people that enables them to settle into the home and develop positive and meaningful relationships. As such, young people find acceptance in the home and appropriately develop trust in those that care for them.

Staff have a thorough understanding of young people and the complexity of their needs. The quality of care provided is under-pinned by a thorough exploration of risk and highly detailed placement planning that successfully addresses all key areas of their learning and development. Young people are encouraged to participate fully in their planning and review process to ensure their voice is heard and that they are fully engaged with their future plans. As such, young people know that their views and opinions are valued and are important in shaping their future.

Young people have a good understanding of their plans and the skills and support that they will need to make a successful transition to adulthood. Young people engage positively in identifying the skills that they already possess and those that they need to learn or develop to achieve a good level of independence before moving on from the home. For example, young people, appropriate to their age, have successfully learned to budget, shop, prepare and cook a wide variety of meals using fresh produce. This is supportive of the home's commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles.

Arrangements for contact with family members is well prioritised in young people's

placement plans ensuring that they have regular opportunities to keep in contact and see those people that are most important to them. Staff consistently support and facilitate visits to see family members and also make them welcome to the children's home to ensure young people have an enjoyable and positive experience.

The home actively seeks to include young people to contribute their ideas both for their care and how the home operates. Young people have a range of ways to make their views known, including young people's meetings, individual key worker sessions, meetings with the home's independent visitor and meetings with senior managers to contribute to the staff appraisal process. As such, young people are active in influencing such as the appearance of their home, the meals and activities they enjoy and how their care is managed.

Young people rarely make formal complaints, preferring instead to resolve any issues they may have directly with staff or young people. However, during this inspection a shortfall was noted in the recording of the only recent complaint made by a young person. The complaint record was found to be incomplete, preventing the reader from sufficiently understanding how the matter had been conducted and finally resolved. The nature of the complaint made did not raise further concerns during this inspection.

Some further improvement has been identified in the leadership and management of the home. Staff supervision is occurring regularly and with greater frequency for those less experienced staff. This is effective in supporting staff in their role and ensuring that there is a mechanism to regularly review their performance and discuss their development needs. The Registered Manager is also participating in a new arrangement for reflective supervision with the company's other Registered Managers. These sessions promote good practice enabling the sharing of ideas and best practice in supporting and safeguarding young people. They also provide a good opportunity for solution-focused discussion to address any issues that may be presenting difficulty to the home.

However, alongside this progress two specific shortfalls were identified in the home's wider quality assurance arrangements that impact on the effectiveness of those arrangements. These include a lack of consultation with stakeholders during the independent monitoring visits and delays in reporting on the findings of the home's internal monitoring activities. These shortfalls mean that some valuable opportunities for feedback are lost that have the potential to influence the visitors' views on the quality of care and safeguarding within the home. Additionally, internal monitoring and reporting arrangements lack continuity and this reduces transparency with Ofsted.

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 to five young males, between the ages of 12 and 17 years. The home cares for young people with learning disabilities as well as those who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties. The organisation also operates a school, registered with the Department for Education, providing fully integrated programmes of care and education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/09/2014	Full	outstanding
24/02/2014	Interim	good progress
10/07/2013	Full	good
25/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24(5))	24/03/2015
33 (2001)	ensure the independent person interviews, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the children's home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion about their safety and well-being (Regulation 33(8)(a))	24/03/2015
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring matters set out in schedule 6 at least once every 3 months; and improving the quality of care in the	24/03/2015

	children's home. (Regulation 34(1))	
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What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.