

SC416599

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in August 2010 and the manager registered in July 2023.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 December 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 22 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2024	Full	Good
07/10/2022	Full	Good
07/06/2021	Full	Good
23/10/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Both children have lived at the home for several years and this has given them the stability to develop loving and trusting relationships with staff. They have made significant progress from their starting points.

Education is seen as important and both children attend the provider's own school. Staff from the school and home work closely together to ensure that information is shared and that there is a consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. This has enabled the children to achieve both academically and personally and to develop friendships.

Children are encouraged to develop skills to help them become independent. This includes having regular discussions about positive relationships, self-esteem, staying safe and maintaining personal hygiene, as well as more practical skills such as cooking and budgeting.

Children's health, both physical and emotional, is given priority in the home. The provider uses a nurse and a therapist to help children to understand what being healthy in all aspects of their life looks like. This rounded approach gives children the opportunity to thrive and deal with their past experiences.

Staff listen to and respect the opinions of children. Children are consulted about all aspects of their lives, including spending time with their family. As a result, with support, one child has been able to move back home to their family. Families and external professionals are overwhelmingly positive about the care offered to children and the positive results this brings.

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

Children are clear that they feel safe in the home and know that staff are there to support them and help them deal with any worries or concerns they have.

Children are helped to understand the risks they face, and staff help them to develop strategies to minimise risk. The strategies, developed with children, are detailed in effective care plans and risk assessments that are updated regularly and overseen by the manager.

Incidents of children going missing from the home are rare. When such incidents occur, there is a well-coordinated response to ensure that the children return to the home quickly and safely.

Behaviour is managed well by staff by using incentives, praise and consequences. Children share with staff what helps them to deal with any emotional crisis they have. Staff are thoughtful and caring when dealing with difficulties that children face in their lives, supported by the clinical input of a therapist. This ensures that children

get the help they need to learn to regulate their own emotions and understand the emotions of others.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is experienced and worked at the home for a long time in a variety of roles before becoming the registered manager. This has enabled her to develop the knowledge and skills to be an excellent role model for staff. She supports staff in ways that help them to develop quickly and effectively. A new but experienced member of staff said, 'The manager is excellent, and she goes above and beyond to be supportive to the children and the staff. You never feel alone.'

The staff team has changed significantly since the last inspection, with staff moving on for a variety of personal reasons. The registered manager has provided stability during this time and has minimised the effects of the changes on the children. This has enabled children to continue to make progress and they develop effective relationships with new staff. Recruitment practice is good, and the registered manager ensures that she only employs staff with the qualities that she feels best fit the ethos of the home.

The staff all recognise and appreciate the level of input from the registered manager and say that she is a great support to them and a strident advocate for children. One parent credits the registered manager for the efforts made for her child to move back home. She feels that the help she received, in the absence of consistent social workers, enabled her to feel confident about her child's return home. This view is supported by professionals, who describe the manager as 'excellent'.

The registered manager uses team meetings and supervision to consistently develop staff and ensure that they meet her aspirational standards. She uses research, videos and information to generate reflective discussions where staff can safely share views and learn. Required training is up to date, as are inductions and supervisions.

The registered manager uses the input from the independent person well. However, the independent person does not always describe in reports the efforts made to contact families and professionals. Unnecessary personal details of children are included in the reports.

The home is well maintained, and the registered manager ensures that staff take care of the home in a way that they would their own home. However, there are maintenance issues that the provider has not addressed. Despite the registered manager raising these issues as they arise, they are not always responded to in a timely way.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the independent person records all efforts made to contact families and professionals. Reports should not include the personal details of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- The registered person should ensure that when the registered manager raises home maintenance issues, that these are addressed in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC416599

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Malvern View, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 4AD

Responsible individual: Leanne Smith

Registered manager: Jean Murray

Inspector

Sue Atkinson Millmoor, Social Care Inspector

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