

SC457254

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. It is part of an organisation that comprises of other children's homes and specialist education provision.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 14 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because

- A high proportion of the staff members are very experienced, competent, nurturing and child centred in their approach to caring for young people. This means that young people are extremely well cared for and enjoy very close bonds with their carers.
- Care planning is detailed, collaborative and child centred. It is informed by research-based practice, reviewed frequently, and results in enhanced life chances for young people.
- All young people are making excellent progress in their education. Leaders and staff have high aspirations for young people and support them intensively to reach their full potential.
- Transitions are exceptionally well managed. Leaders and staff take time to understand the needs of young people prior to them being placed at or leaving the home.
- The setting places high emphasis on proactive and positive support for young people to reduce incidents of challenging behaviour, which are rare. When incidents occur, they are exceptionally well managed.
- All young people are encouraged and supported to access positive structured activities and explore their interests and talents; this increases their emotional well-being and reduces the likelihood of them engaging in risk-taking behaviour.
- Healthcare planning is rigorous and effective. Young people have made considerable progress in achieving good physical and emotional well-being.
- The setting is very well managed by an extremely competent and experienced leader.
- This service is highly regarded by placing authorities and families, who have provided very positive feedback.
- All of the difficulties highlighted in the last inspection have been addressed and progress exceeds reasonable expectations. Leaders and staff have gone to great lengths to ensure that the impact of lower staffing levels and changes in senior

leadership have not impacted detrimentally on the experiences and progress of young people.

The children's home's areas for development

- The manager has not completed staff appraisals due to issues with staffing levels in the home.
- Young people would benefit from learning about internet safety.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
04/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
08/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/07/2015	Full	Outstanding

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
32: Fitness of workers (4) The registered person must ensure that all employees— (c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 32(4)(c))	28/07/2017

Recommendations

- Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning, unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why this would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access a computer and the internet safely. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 29, paragraph 5.19)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The staff team at this home is highly experienced, qualified and dedicated to providing a very high standard of care for young people. Staff have successfully built close and trusting bonds with young people, which has increased young people's ability to make and sustain good relationships with people who are important to them.

Transitions are extremely well planned and well managed. One young person is currently preparing to move into a semi-independent placement. This young person has made exceptional progress across all aspects of his development while living at this home. Staff are supporting him to prepare for this move and have worked tirelessly to ensure that he has the life skills required to be successful in adulthood. His literacy and numeracy skills have increased considerably from his starting point. Initially, he was unable to read and through the efforts of staff working closely with his school has increased his ability by three levels of academic achievement. He has developed significantly, both socially and emotionally. His social worker said, 'He will be going to this new placement with the foundations and support put in place by [name of home]... at one time he was being restrained every day, making demands of everyone. This has

all gone now. He is a lovely lad and has come on so well in that respect.' One family member said about the progress he has made, 'It has made such a difference to his life and happiness.'

The other young people at the home are committed to full-time education and are making fantastic progress. One young person spends 30 minutes daily completing work on his GCSE courses with support from staff. This has become a part of his usual routine and is testament to the high aspirations that staff have for young people to reach their full potential. This young person is on track to achieve academic success, which is outstanding progress. All young people are accessing structured and positive activities within the community. This includes football, skating and youth groups. The staff facilitate a range of opportunities for young people to pursue their individual interests, such as fishing and table-top model war games. They promote positive friendships and facilitate opportunities for young people to socialise with peers. This increases young people's self-esteem and sense of belonging, and improves their emotional well-being.

Healthcare is a core strength of this service. The organisation employs a dedicated healthcare practitioner who progresses comprehensive healthcare plans. She works very closely with the setting and collaborates with other professionals to ensure that all healthcare needs are met. She has devised an individual nutritious diet plan for one young person, and has worked with the staff to implement this positively, resulting in a weight gain of 13 pounds for the young person, which is outstanding progress. Medication arrangements are robust and regularly audited. Young people are offered a range of therapies commissioned by the organisation to help them process difficult memories and feelings and enhance their emotional well-being. One young person accesses art therapy and another attends regular counselling sessions. Staff are given very detailed instruction in how to support such therapies in their daily practice and successfully embed this into their interaction with young people. This innovative practice contributes to a significant increase in emotional health and well-being, which is excellent progress.

The views of young people are at the heart of the service. Young people are consulted on a very regular basis about their day-to-day care arrangements. Staff respond accordingly to their wishes and feelings. All young people are offered advocacy support when appropriate, and are reminded of this right. They know how to complain and have historically been supported to do so. Their home is decorated and arranged in accordance with their individual preferences. The home is very spacious, which provides young people with the privacy and personal space they need to relax. Staff ensure that young people are supported to undertake self-care, enjoy mealtimes and socialise with staff and peers.

Young people are encouraged to develop their skills for independence. They are learning to budget, travel independently (when appropriate), undertake household tasks and cook for themselves. Staff work positively and sensitively with families and recognise the importance of young people having meaningful contact with their families. Staff travel long distances to ensure that contact takes place as planned. One family has recently thanked the team with flowers and cards, demonstrating genuine appreciation for the

efforts of the manager and staff in supporting them to enjoy a good relationship with the young person.

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

Young people have comprehensive risk assessments in place that identify all of the relevant risks to their safety. Through careful planning, staff are aware of the steps to take in the event of young people exhibiting any high-risk behaviour. Staff know young people extremely well and are able to de-escalate and prevent incidents effectively. The setting adopts a very positive research-based approach to helping young people process their feelings appropriately, reflect on their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions. This means physical interventions and sanctions are rarely required. There have been no instances of either in this inspection period. Young people who have a complex history of aggressive behaviour have made exceptional progress in learning more socially acceptable ways of managing their feelings. They no longer exhibit this behaviour. This is outstanding progress that has significantly enhanced their life chances.

The home is very well maintained. Staff provide a safe physical environment for young people. There have been very few incidents of a serious nature. One incident, where a young person exhibited distress and attempted to self-harm, was managed exceptionally well. Leaders and staff took appropriate action to collaborate with other professionals, provide intensive emotional support and resolve the root cause of the young person's difficulties.

Young people rarely go missing from this setting. On one occasion, two young people left their educational setting without permission. Staff were highly proactive in working with external agencies and returning them to the home, where additional support was provided. The setting worked with education partners to ensure that robust plans were implemented to keep young people safe on an ongoing basis.

All young people have access to a computer and other mobile devices. On one occasion, one young person accessed inappropriate content; this was managed appropriately by staff. Young people would benefit from structured support to understand the risks associated with social media platforms and internet use. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly experienced and suitably qualified. She demonstrates a very high level of commitment to her role. Since the last inspection, all of the requirements relating to senior leadership in the organisation have been met. The organisation has successfully recruited two male members of staff; this has addressed the gender imbalance that existed in the team.

Staff report that the manager is an excellent leader. They benefit from an extensive

training programme that is tailored to the individual needs of the young people at the home. Staff state that they are supervised regularly and feel very well supported. When the setting experienced resourcing difficulties, the manager worked hard to ensure that lower staffing levels did not impact negatively on staff morale. She simultaneously contributed to the staffing rota and maintained her leadership duties. Staff have not had their performance appraised in the last year; however, this task is in progress and the impact on young people's experiences is minimal. A requirement is made to address this matter.

Care planning is excellent. Leaders routinely monitor and evaluate the progress that young people make. The manager demonstrates a keen ability to advocate strongly for the young people in her care and works in a highly collaborative manner with other agencies. Where the progress of young people is hindered, there is clear evidence of the manager constructively challenging other services to review young people's care plans and provide them with a higher level of support. As a result, all young people have made outstanding progress from their starting points. Placing authorities have provided extremely positive feedback about this service. One independent reviewing officer described the setting as 'proactive and well-managed' and had no suggestions for improvement to the service. One social worker provided glowing feedback, and said, 'I can't fault them.'

Leaders are acutely aware of the strengths and developmental areas in the home. The manager cites the experience and commitment of the staff team as being the greatest strength of the service. Her areas of focus for improvement are all exceptionally child centred and aim to secure the best possible outcomes for the children in her care. Record-keeping practices are exemplary. The setting is achieving and exceeding the aims and objectives as defined within the statement of purpose for the home.

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 difference 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 who 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: SC457254

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Lakes Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Rayrigg Showrooms, Rayrigg Road, Windermere
LA23 3DN

Responsible individual: Paul Jenkinson

Registered manager: Caroline Rae

Inspector

Nicola Thomas: social care regulatory inspector

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