

# 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 owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to four boys, aged between nine and 16, who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager took up post in October 2019 and was registered with Ofsted in November 2019.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

### Inspection dates: 30 September and 1 October 2021

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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:** 7 January 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
12/06/2018	Full	Outstanding
24/05/2017	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children are extremely settled in this home and are continuing to make outstanding progress. Most have lived in the home for several years and all children were living at the home during Ofsted's last inspection.

Children flourish in this home. The high level of care and support they receive from staff ensures that they thrive and have a strong sense of belonging in the home. Children have developed strong bonds with the manager and staff and speak fondly of staff and their relationships with them.

Children are thriving and growing in a highly nurturing environment, where staff know them well and know how to respond to their changing needs. Children enjoy healthy lifestyles. Their healthcare needs and progress are successfully promoted and monitored by the company's registered nurse.

All children have benefited from being able to access the company's therapeutic consultants. Some children have decided that they have come to the end of their direct therapy journey, while others continue to enjoy the process and recognise their progress.

Children attend and are making remarkable progress at an independent school run by the company. Children's learning is strongly supported by staff. This was particularly evident during periods when children were unable to attend school due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Staff rose to the challenge of home schooling, finding creative ways to help children complete lessons, using the context of interests they already had. For one child, this resulted in a significant improvement in mathematics being identified on his return to school.

Staff understand the importance of making enjoyable memories that children can treasure. Some outdoor activities previously enjoyed by children were not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since restrictions were lifted, children have enjoyed a wide range of new and exciting activities. For instance, children enthused about an annual local challenge undertaken by them and staff as a team overcoming obstacles, climbing over and through mud and water. Such was the success that they have already entered the challenge for next year.

Children are again enjoying spending time with family and friends that was previously curtailed due to travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic. Family time is well supported by staff, who work alongside families with a view to children either moving to live with family members or moving to foster carers closer to home.

Parents speak highly of the home and the care their children receive. One parent commented, 'He is settled and happy there. Staff work closely with me and I cannot fault them at all. They genuinely care about [child's name]. It's not just a job to

them, I can see how committed they are.' Another parent said, 'Staff make me feel more involved in his care. They keep me well informed, and they will often ring me to update me. I have no concerns. He is always happy there. Staff understand him.'

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

Children say they feel very safe at this home. Children know how staff plan to keep them safe, and know what is expected of them in staying safe in the home and when they are out in the community.

Staff have a thorough knowledge of good safeguarding practice and maintain this by keeping up to date with best practice and reflective discussion, including consultation with the company's lead therapist. Consequently, staff are skilled and consistent in meeting children's individual needs. One commented, 'Staff give really good advice about our emotions, for example how to behave when we are in school.'

Staff were able to strike the right balance at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that children were well informed about the nature of the virus, and educated about how to keep safe and well without causing fear or panic. One child explained, 'Staff have supported me throughout COVID and made me feel less worried and less cautious for what will happen next in the third wave of COVID-19.'

Care planning and risk management is thorough and well documented, ensuring that staff have a clear and shared understanding of the individual support required to keep children safe.

Children enjoy established routines and are familiar with and respect house rules and boundaries. The mutual respect shown, and the sustained improvement in the quality of relationships shared between children and staff, clearly influence their positive behaviour in this home. Consistency shown in applying rules and boundaries adds to the sense of safety children feel in this home.

Children do not go missing from this home, nor has their behaviour ever necessitated physical intervention by staff. Children acknowledge those few occasions when their behaviour has fallen short of expectations and accept responsibility to make reparation. This is a massive achievement for each child compared to behaviours identified prior to moving to this home.

Recruitment arrangements remain robust, reducing the likelihood of children being cared for by adults that may harm them.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The registered manager has provided strong and consistent leadership and management of this home since the home's last inspection. The manager has successfully continued with her own personal development, as well as ensuring that

her staff have received the training and support they require. She is respected by her staff team and seen to be a positive role model to all staff.

There has been minimal staff turnover since the last inspection. New staff recruited have fitted in well with the existing team and been warmly welcomed by the children. Staff show genuine interest in the children they care for, and are committed to maintaining a high standard of child-centred care that enables children to achieve excellent outcomes.

The home is operating in accordance with its statement of purpose. The therapeutic approach adopted and practised by the home is significantly influencing the excellent achievements that children are making. Staff see this as a real strength as it has informed their professional parenting practice, allowing them greater ability to adapt to deal with issues as they arise.

Staff say they feel very supported by their registered manager and senior managers. Good communication, regular supervision and opportunities for frequent consultation are identified by most staff to be the key supports they benefit from. These have clearly influenced the team members in their reflective practice.

Well-established internal monitoring arrangements ensure that the home is thoroughly scrutinised by both the registered manager and head of care. Information about the home's performance is shared with staff and informs the continuous development of the home. A recent change in external monitoring arrangements has provided with more robust reporting. The home's arrangements promote transparency and demonstrate that the manager is in no doubt of the home's strengths and areas for future development.

Social workers and other professionals confirm that children receive a high standard of care at this home and that they make very positive and marked progress from their starting points. One social worker commented, 'I can only speak highly of [name of the home] and the whole service. I have seen a massive difference in [child's name], he has made great progress. The staff take things in their stride. The therapeutic work is extremely positive.'

## **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:** SC457254

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** North Lakes Children's Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Malvern View, Saxon Business Park, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove B60 4AD

**Responsible individual:** Paul Jenkinson

**Registered manager:** Sandra Seggie

## Inspector

Gillian Walters, Social Care Inspector

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