

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	02/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC005042
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered provider	The Partnership of Care Today Children's Services
Registered provider address	Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 6LR

Responsible individual	Vivien Snape
Registered manager	Justin Pomelli
Inspector	Pete Hylton

Inspection date	02/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.	
This home was last inspected in July 2016 and was judged to be good. One requirement relating to staff supervision and one recommendation relating to risk assessment were made. There has been improvement to both of these identified areas. Staff are now supervised with better frequency and the registered manager has introduced new methods of supervision, including the use of whole-group sessions, to further good practice in the home. Similarly, risk assessments are now much more focused on the presenting needs of young people. This allows staff to be aware of and respond appropriately to the individual risks and vulnerabilities which young people may face. The registered manager continues to lead a home that is settled and is providing a good quality of care to young people. The registered manager is supported by a deputy manager who, like the registered manager, is qualified to the required level. Management oversight is generally good. However, the manager's six-monthly reports do not ensure that the views of young people, parents, staff or placing social workers are explored, evaluated or actioned. This has, to date, caused no demonstrable negative outcomes for young people. The environment is, on the whole, well maintained. Some recent damage from a leak is being repaired and this work is due to be finished very soon. Some other areas of the home are in need of further repair; a shower area is poorly maintained, for example. The registered manager confirmed that these repairs are planned and will be carried out shortly. These problem areas detract from an otherwise warm and familial environment. The outside of the home has been improved through young people and staff redesigning an area of the garden. This project involved the young people in creating a new outside space and assisting in its construction. As a result, this area of the garden reflects the choices of young people and serves as a permanent feature that celebrates the effort and creativity of all involved. The young person's guide has been revised and improved since the last inspection. It now includes a more personalised approach, which will be helpful to any new young person who arrives at the home. Photographs of the home are supported by	

space for staff and the young person to add their own views and comments. This ensures that young people who arrive at the home are made to feel welcome and involved from the outset. The staff team is totally committed to providing good care. Staff told inspectors that this is a 'home for children' as opposed to being a 'children's home'.

Young people continue to develop their community responsibility and their awareness of the needs of others. The home's managers have set up, and continue to run, regular bingo evenings in order to raise money for a nominated charity. Families and friends of the young people attend such events and the money raised goes to local causes. This ensures that young people develop their sense of helping others. These events also build on the excellent links that exist between the home and young people's families. A parent commented, 'It is like the old [young person] is back and whatever you are doing is working.'

The behaviour of young people is appropriately managed and restraint is only used as a last resort. Staff are confident in using techniques to diffuse challenging behaviours and know the young people well. This means that when restraint is used, it is because all other attempts to manage behaviour have been tried. The recording of restraint is clear and detailed. The home's managers review incidents of restraint and regular team meetings focus on the needs and behaviours of all young people. The staff are confident in managing behaviour and work well together. There is a genuine shared commitment to ensuring that young people are supported to the best of staff's abilities.

The home is a busy environment in which young people are encouraged to develop their tolerance of others and the skills that they need in order to live as part of a wider group. Serious incidents between young people are rare and notifications, as well as appropriate and immediate actions, take place when required. Young people's socially unacceptable behaviour towards each other and staff is challenged by the use of appropriate and fair consequences. These focus on building positive relationships and modelling more acceptable behaviours. For example, should a young person display rude behaviour to their peers, they are encouraged to reflect on how this makes others feel. As a result, young people are developing a sense of empathy and understanding. When consequences are given to young people, they are clearly recorded and include a record of young people's views. This enables the registered manager to evaluate the effectiveness of such measures.

Since the last inspection, there have been no occasions on which young people have gone missing from the home. Should such events occur, the staff are aware of the locally agreed protocols that are in place. The staff team offers vigilant yet age-appropriate supervision to all young people who live in the home. Independence in the local community is a goal for young people and, when appropriate, is fully encouraged by staff. This ensures that young people are able to explore the local community and develop friendships with peers outside of the home.

Views from social workers and parents are very positive. Comments included: 'The staff work in a very child-focused way and communicate excellently with myself and carers. This approach has had a profoundly positive impact for the child we all work with. This is evident in the child's emotional well-being, behaviour and his incredible progress in school.'

A separate satellite home operates in the vicinity. This is successfully operated as a 'move on' facility for young people who are post-16 and are living with increasing independence. This part of the home's function works well, as young people are developing their skills for full independence while benefiting from the skilled support of established and experienced staff from the home. The satellite is maintained to an exceptionally high standard and young people enjoy being there, along with their friends, who regularly visit for meals and to spend time with the young people. Progress for young people has been very good; all young people at the satellite home are engaged in further education and also enjoy part-time employment to further support their increasing independence.

As a result of this inspection, the home is judged to have sustained effectiveness. There have been marked improvements, but these are balanced by the failure to ensure that young people's views, alongside those of parents, staff and social workers, are fully considered when the home is reviewed.

Information about this children's home

The privately owned service is both a children's home and a school. It provides care and education for up to 10 young people who have significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The children's home can accommodate up to 10 young people, and a further two young people can be accommodated in the satellite home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/07/2016	Full	Good
20/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/09/2015	Full	Good
17/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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) meet(s) 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(5))	31/03/2017

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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