

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005042
Inspector	David Morgan
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Registered person	Care Today (Children's Services) Ltd
Registered person address	Lansdowne House 85 Buxton Road STOCKPORT Cheshire SK2 6LR
Responsible individual	Vivien Anne Snape
Registered manager	Justin Anton Pomelli
Date of last inspection	28/05/2014

Inspection date	17/03/2015
Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection

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

This inspection finds that the good level of overall effectiveness found last time has been sustained. Children are pleased with the care they receive and feel that the staff are fair. Children are sensitive to the large size of the group and the fact that they are all at school together. Nevertheless, one said, 'This is the best children's home I've been in; they keep me out of trouble.' Another said, 'It's a lot of fun once you get used to it,' which represents the views of the majority. External professionals have praised the staff recently for their high levels of support.

Children enjoy a well-structured recreational programme that introduces them to a good range of activities both on and off site. Outside there are all-weather as well as grass playing areas that have recently been supplemented by outdoor gym equipment. Some children enjoy army cadets, for example, and others undertake fishing, football and pool. During the inspection some children were earning extra money by doing odd jobs and several were looking forward to going to the fair. They earn free-time to spend off site. This is an attractive and valued incentive that children know can be lost or reduced according to their behaviour. Patterns of success in this area often reflect their emotional progress. Children report excellent relationships with staff, on which most of their progress depends. Staff display substantial commitment to the children, demonstrated, for example, by them visiting when they are off duty. As a result, children feel safe. It also contributes substantially to the pleasant atmosphere in the home.

Very few safeguarding issues have arisen since the last inspection. Children learn to keep themselves safe. The largest concern is children being absent or missing. These occasions are managed well and entail close liaison with other professionals. Such professionals are positive about the staff team. Most of the incidents are of short duration and children are at minimal risk. The risk of children being subjected

to sexual exploitation is low. Negative incidents occasionally arise in the local community but are effectively de-escalated. The team encourages positive behaviour by using a clear, therapeutic model, which can include direct therapy for children. Children soon learn their responsibilities and respond accordingly, for example, by reducing racist language and aggression. One said, 'I'm a lot different now: I've got more respect for others, myself and my school work.' All the children agree that the staff treat them fairly. One said, 'We understand why the rules are applied.' Physical intervention techniques include the use, where necessary, of prone restraints, but are avoided wherever possible. Such incidents are carefully monitored for appropriateness and frequency and usually show reductions over time.

The staff team successfully undertake direct work with some parents by addressing practical issues and behavioural obstacles presented by children. Several families show marked progress, which is reflected in increased visits home by children. One parent said, 'He's improved his behaviours so much; I'm very proud of him.' Having the school on site means there is a high level of consistent practice between the professionals who have the most direct contact with each child. Exceptionally high levels of attendance are achieved that are the basis for the academic progress made by many children and their aspirations. Some children are prepared for greater independence at smaller homes. An option for some is the two-bedded satellite home associated with this service although it is not currently in use.

The plans for each child are recorded clearly and updated well. Shortfalls in the receipt of documents from social workers is an occasional problem that is escalated promptly through channels that include Ofsted, where appropriate. This helps to ensure that the rights of children are addressed. Consultation occurs with children in an effective variety of ways and as a result children know their views make a difference. These and other activities are closely monitored by an external visitor and by the management team. These exercises serve to ensure that standards of care are maintained but they lack evaluation. The cutting and pasting of comments between months and lack of evidence of progress, either in the service or in children, also serve to limit their usefulness. Consequently, the development plan is a stand-alone document that serves to sustain rather than raise standards in the ways that senior staff desire.

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 12 young people who have significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Ten young people can be accommodated at the children's home with a further two young people accommodated in a satellite home. Ten young people were accommodated at the time of this inspection, all in the main home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/05/2014	Full	good
18/12/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
10/10/2013	Full	good
11/03/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- implement effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. This is with regard to such processes, undertaken by the manager and independent visitor, evaluating the information as part of a process of improvement and indicating where progress has been made. (NMS 21.1)

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.