

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005048
Inspector	Andrew Hewston
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Registered person	Care Today (Children's Services) Ltd
Registered person address	Care Today Children's Services, Lansdowne House 85 Buxton Road STOCKPORT Cheshire SK2 6LR
Responsible individual	Vivien Anne Snape
Registered manager	Beverley Louise Tuck
Date of last inspection	26/03/2014

Inspection date	21/11/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Children make excellent progress while being at the home. They learn to form positive and caring attachments with the staff team. Social workers report significant decreases in negative behaviours and increasing involvement with education, further supporting positive outcomes for the children. The quality of care is good and effective placement planning is used to promote activities, education and health planning.

Children are kept safe through staff's awareness of how to respond to safeguarding concerns and the low use of restraint. Some recordings require additional detail including restraints, recruitment, and complaints to ensure that details relating to the care of children is correct in the home.

The home is comfortable and children are encouraged to personalise their rooms. Some areas require decoration to develop a higher level of décor throughout the home.

The management team offer a high level of support to the staff team. All staff have a high awareness of the needs of the children and are fully supported with delivering care to meet these. Training is updated on a regular basis and records are monitored on a monthly basis.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for eight young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
08/11/2013	Full	outstanding
07/11/2012	Interim	good progress
20/06/2012	Full	outstanding

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, discipline or restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose (Regulation 17B (3))	31/01/2015
26 (2001)	ensure people are fit to work at the children's home, specifically to ensure full and satisfactory information is available [in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2] (Regulation 26 (3 (d)))	31/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure children's views, wishes and feelings are acted upon, in the day to day running of the home and important decisions or changes in the child's life, unless this is contrary to their interests through key work sessions (NMS 1.1)
- ensure children can take up issues in the most appropriate way with support and without fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Also ensure children receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress (NMS 1.6)
- ensure the home's location and design promotes children's health, safety and wellbeing and avoids factors such as excessive isolation and areas that present significant risks to children (NMS 10.2)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of those reasons (NMS 5.10)
- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for (NMS 19.6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Children make significant improvements in their behaviour, health, education and ability to form attachments due to the caring and supportive staff team. One social worker stated that the staff had 'transformed a child where there was a huge risk due to his criminal activities, decreasing his need to take medication and increasing his educational ability and enthusiasm within school.'

Children are able to identify staff who are important to them, and staff are confident in being affectionate yet professional in the way that they work. This has allowed children to develop in their ability to form positive and trusting attachments. Recent concentration on life story work ensures children develop a strong awareness of their backgrounds and also look towards future changes in their placements with enthusiasm. One social worker stated that 'following a lot of placement moves, here is the only place that he has wanted to stay.' Children's behaviour improves at the home and in some cases this is dramatic. One youth offending team member reports that 'the change in (the child) has been nothing short of miraculous, having previously had serious concerns about his behaviour, the staff team are a winning combination.'

With the educational placement on the site of the home, attendance is high. Children subsequently are consistently involved in education and enjoy their achievements. Success in school is celebrated and children state that 'school is great fun, you get to learn things and have a laugh as well.'

Children's health needs are consistently supported. Staff's high awareness of the individual health needs of the children means that medical appointments and the actions resulting from these are responded to swiftly. Children enjoy the healthy lifestyle that the staff promote, eating wholesome meals and fully taking part in a range of activities.

Contact arrangements for children promote their ability to keep in touch with their families. Contact arrangements within children's files are clear and visits take place both at the home and local facilities. Staff attempt to support the contact experience where appropriate, engaging the child and their family and sharing information to develop relationships.

Quality of care **good**

Staff offer a high level of care that is due in part to the strong relationships developed between themselves and the children. All children spoken to enjoy being with the staff team, and are able to discuss positive aspects of the staff and why they get on with them. Daily records show that there are on-going discussions with children about a wide range of aspects within their lives and their care, this ensures they are involved with planning on a day to day basis. Key working sessions are completed to ensure that children's views are sought and responded to within a more formal forum. There is some variation between records of children's key work meetings however. This lack of a consistent approach towards individualised meetings does not always ensure that children's views are responded to. The weekly children's meetings show that good discussions are held with the group, including the planning of activities, menus and discussions about issues within the home. The meetings records include dissatisfaction regarding the home's vehicles. This is recorded as a complaint within the meetings book, yet has not been transferred into the complaints log. Records do not therefore always show how the management team are responding to the issues raised by the children.

Information is available within the home relating to how children can make complaints and is also given to them on admission. Children state that they know how to make complaints but have not had to fill in any forms as 'things are sorted out by the staff if we need anything doing.'

Placement planning is detailed and pertinent to the differing needs of the children. Plans link well to the Looked After Children documentation and a 'care planning tracker' is updated on a regular basis to keep plans in line with current behaviours as well as the most recent reviews. This allows staff to always be aware of the most current care practices for each child. Planning is highly individualised and includes information relating to young people's differing cultures.

Effective health planning documentation is in place. Children attend a good range of appointments with differing health professionals to make sure that their health needs are being met. Children's mental health needs are responded to through the organisation's professionals who offer a service to the young people as well as providing information to the staff team to support the care given. Staff complete training in medication administration and all necessary documentation is completed swiftly as well as being audited regularly to ensure they are completed well. Despite the staff team responding effectively to the medical needs of individual children, not all of these can be responded to within such a remote placement. The staff fully support the appropriate placement of children and are working with social workers to ensure that necessary moves are completed without negatively affecting those with specific medical needs.

Education is central to the routines in the home. Children attend the organisation's own registered school and say that they enjoy this. The home's staff work with teaching staff to ensure that any barriers to education that children face are addressed and resolved. For example, some children have additional support in the

classroom. Staff continually celebrate children's educational achievements through verbal praise, incentives and rewards. As a result, children recognise the positive impact education is having on their development and future prospects.

Children enjoy a great range of activities while at the home. Some children are involved in developing individual skills through lessons in swimming and skiing, while others enjoy group activities including golfing, cinema trips and the local disco. Children discuss trips that they have enjoyed and there are photos around the home to remind the children of the positive times that they have experienced.

The house is situated within a rural area with access being difficult to the property in poor weather conditions. Plans are in place to respond to this isolation with additional heating, catering and transport arrangements. Internally the home is comfortable and practical to respond to the demands that eight children bring. Some areas require updates in their décor including the stairs and landing areas. This is in the home's development plan. Children state that they enjoy being in the countryside and that they enjoy looking after the two pigs belonging to the home.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Children are safe in the home and say they feel safe. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the issues that negatively impact on children's safety and protection. This is because staff receive regular and effective training on safeguarding. Training is supported by clear safeguarding procedures. As a result, any allegations or suspicions of harm are effectively managed and promptly reported, promoting the welfare and safety of children.

Discussions regarding bullying form part of the children's weekly meetings and no concerns have been raised relating to this behaviour. Children state that they are able to talk to staff if they feel unhappy about the way that other children behave.

Occasions where children go missing from the home are rare. Reporting and searching protocols are in place in the event of such behaviours from children. This has happened once since the last inspection. Although staff are able to discuss the thorough response to this event, the records of the staff response and information gained on the child's return are not clear.

The staff team expect children to behave well both within the home and when they go out. Children are aware of these expectations and respond well to them. Good use of individualised behaviour management targets allow children to gain rewards for positive behaviours. This has resulted in rewards being used more than sanctions in behaviour management records. Levels of restraint at the home are low and only used in line with the individuals' risk assessments. All incidents of behaviour management are fully recorded on the forms that go into the children's files to support the safety of the children. Information that is recorded within the home's

record is not consistently dated and signed off to show that the manager has a full awareness of the incident. Although this does not have an impact on the care of the children, once they have left the home full information is not always then available.

Arrangements for the appointment of staff are robust, including information necessary, in the vast majority of cases. Some recruitment check sheets have not been verified by the appointing manager including identification checks. The check sheet also refers to information required within the national minimum standards rather than regulations, and does not state that full employment histories have been examined. This failure in the records of checks may affect the safety of young people.

Children participate in regular fire drills and practice evacuations. This means that in the event of a fire, they understand how to exit the home safely. Staff complete regular fire safety and health and safety checks. Necessary repairs, identified during health and safety checks, are immediately responded to. This ensures that the safety of children and staff is maintained.

Leadership and management

good

The home is run by a permanent manager who has been registered with Ofsted since June 2014. The Registered Manager continues to work towards attaining a suitable qualification in the management of children's social care and is due to complete this course shortly. In addition, the Registered Manager has a number of years' experience of working in, and managing, residential environments for children. The Registered Manager has ensured that the one recommendation made at the previous inspection has been addressed.

The Statement of Purpose gives information regarding the home and its purpose and has been updated to include changes in staff. The children's guide gives a clear summary of the role of the home and some basic rules and expectations.

Staff benefit from regular and effective formal supervision which provides support for them in their caring roles and focuses on their personal development. This means that the performance of the staff is continually monitored. As a result, children work with staff who are competent and whose practice is scrutinised. A minority of the staff team require their appraisals to be updated to ensure all staff have a full awareness of their developmental needs. The Registered Manager ensures staff complete all mandatory training and that the training is regularly refreshed. Consequently staff have the necessary skills to identify and meet young people's needs. This impacts positively on outcomes for young people and the quality of the service provided by the home.

The Registered Manager has a high awareness of on-going issues within the home and a development plan is in place to move areas of care practice forwards.

Monitoring of the home is completed by the manager and through external visits. Reports are received by Ofsted every two months. Although the managerial monitoring is informative, a lack of a quarterly examination of trends and patterns in care practice does not allow for further assessment of the home's practices.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.