

Inspection of The Child Care Company (Old Windsor) Limited

Inspection dates:

12 to 15 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

The Child Care Company provides apprenticeships nationally, specialising in apprenticeships and adult learning programmes in childcare and the care of young people. At the time of inspection, there were 2,364 apprentices studying programmes from level 2 to level 7. Of these, 970 were studying level 4 children, young people and families practitioner (CPYP), 545 were studying level 3 early years educator (EYE) and 112 were studying level 2 early years practitioner (EYP). Approximately 260 apprentices were 16 to 18 years old. Apprentices receive online one-to-one learning sessions and complete practical training in the workplace. There were fewer than five adult learners studying childcare programmes. Leaders have recently introduced group cohort sessions to support peer learning. The Child Care Company does not have any learners in receipt of high needs funding. Leaders do not work with any subcontractors. The Child Care Company was last inspected in January 2018, when inspectors judged the quality of the provision to be good.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners and apprentices value the knowledge and expertise of staff and enjoy their learning. They benefit from a supportive environment created by their development coaches and mentors. Most learners and apprentices achieve well and recognise their new knowledge, skills and behaviours, which they apply successfully in their workplace. Most learners and apprentices produce work to a high standard and rightly feel well supported and prepared for their final assessment.

Learners and apprentices value the collaborative approach from their coaches and employers, which supports them to develop substantial new knowledge and skills successfully. For example, coaches work with apprentices and their employers to successfully adapt their workplace practice around feeding children and monitoring sleep following recent published serious case reviews. Consequently, learners can recall and apply their learning in different scenarios well.

Most learners and apprentices develop their character, confidence and resilience well as a result of their training. For example, level 5 early years lead practitioner EYLP apprentices manage difficult conversations such as changing staff rotas and room leadership responsibilities of staff well. Level 4 CYPFP apprentices confidently advocate for the children and young people in their care in complex, multi-agency meetings. As a result, most quickly gain the confidence they need to deal with challenging work situations.

Learners and apprentices actively engage in discussions that foster an environment of mutual respect and tolerance. For example, level 5 apprentices talk confidently about democratic workplaces and access to cultural activities for children. Learners and apprentices understand the links between the policies and procedures they operate under and the rule of law. As a result, they are encouraged to become better citizens as well as better employees.

Learners and apprentices feel safe and are safe in their workplaces and during their studies. They know how to raise a concern and who to speak to if they have a concern about themselves or others.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have high expectations for learners and apprentices to achieve well, which most do. They have selected and developed ambitious curriculums skilfully to ensure they meet the needs of learners, apprentices and employers effectively. For example, leaders have worked with employers effectively, to understand the skills gaps and the recruitment challenges the sector faces. In adult programmes, learners choose from a broad range of subject content which has been selected with input from employers to meet the needs of the sector. This helps new staff to achieve mandatory sector qualifications and provides opportunities for employed staff to develop within their role. As a result, most learners and apprentices benefit from a programme well aligned to their workplace role.

Leaders and managers have designed and sequenced curriculums carefully and logically, which enables learners and apprentices to progressively build their skills and confidence successfully. For example, on the level 3 EYE, leaders have carefully shaped the curriculum, starting with the professional development module, to help apprentices become a reflective practitioner in the workplace. However, level 4 CYPFP apprentices working in the youth offender institutes struggle to make the links between the learning on their course and their job roles. They cannot always apply their learning to their workplace.

Leaders ensure they remove barriers to learning for apprentices and learners with additional needs. For example, they work with the Royal National Institute of Blind People to ensure that resources are in place for learners with a visual impairment. They use trauma-informed practice to support personal barriers learners may have. As a result, most of these learners and apprentices feel well supported and make good progress.

Learners and apprentices benefit from coaches who share their expertise and mastery of their subjects during off-the-job training successfully. For example, in adult learning, development coaches are experienced practitioners in their specialism. Most are from industry and use this experience to engage and enthuse learners well. Level 5 EYLP coaches know their subject well and apply their industry experience to their teaching, contextualising key learning points to the apprentices own setting.

Coaches teach new concepts skilfully to help learners and apprentices remember new information quickly and successfully, which ensures they retain their new knowledge and skills securely over time. For example, on the level 2 EYP, coaches help apprentices to reflect on their workplace knowledge comprehensively. Adult learners studying the children's mental health curriculum are able to recognise the support needs of children who experience a family relationship breakdown. As a result, learners use positive approaches and distraction techniques to support the children in their care. This helps them to apply their knowledge well and develop a secure level of understanding.

Coaches use their knowledge of apprentices' workplaces to contextualise training successfully. For example, they question apprentices skilfully around how they conduct risk assessments when taking children to soft play areas. Consequently, apprentices improve in their job role and become better employees.

Coaches use assessment techniques effectively, to help most learners and apprentices to understand their progress and what they need to do to improve further. In most cases, coaches provide helpful feedback and allow opportunities for learners to reflect and work on areas of weakness through tailored support, which learners value. For example, in adult learning programmes, development coaches use questioning and discussion to identify gaps in learning and support learners to develop their knowledge further. As result, learners move through topics swiftly to build on their learning.

A small number of apprentices do not benefit from high-quality support and guidance when assessors have changed during their training. Where apprentices do not receive frequent review meetings, they do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable and are not sufficiently clear on their progress to date. Leaders have robust and intelligent plans in place. However, leaders' actions have yet to have a consistent impact on apprentices' progress.

Most adult learners and apprentices are very well prepared and supported for their next steps. They achieve this by gaining valuable qualifications and developing new skills to support employment, promotion or greater responsibility at their work. For example, Level 5 EYLP apprentices take on more senior roles, develop the skills to manage teams through change and are able to pass on their learning to others to aid their development.

Leaders support the health and well-being of learners and apprentices in their care well. They rightly recognise that many apprentices work in challenging sectors where they are responsible for the care of highly vulnerable children and young people. They provide access to free and confidential counselling support, which apprentices value.

Leaders rightly acknowledge that apprentices do not receive sufficient or age-appropriate guidance on key topics needed for their personal development, such as healthy relationships, equality and diversity, and health and safety. As a result, too many apprentices do not have a secure understanding of these topics.

Staff prepare most learners and apprentices well for future success in their chosen careers. Most learners and apprentices are provided with helpful advice about next steps from the start of their programme, which most revisit in frequent helpful meetings with development coaches. As a result, they are encouraged to consider a wide range of progression opportunities from very early in their apprenticeship. For example, level 3 business administration apprentices discuss promotion opportunities and how to present themselves at interviews with their coaches. Level 4 CYPFP apprentices are clear that they can move on to further study such as level 5 apprenticeships and other higher education courses or take their skills further in social work or youth work.

Leaders ensure staff are well trained and experienced to carry out their roles successfully and benefit from effective training to develop their practice. For example, staff complete regular, helpful professional development sessions, such as managing online training and effective marking and feedback. Managers complete deep dives to support staff to make progress and develop their skills further so they can support their learners and apprentices to achieve their qualification.

Leaders and managers value their teams and staff well-being is a priority. They ensure support is available for both personal and professional needs, for example an employee assistance programme, a monthly town hall to ask questions and voice

opinions and regular meetings to discuss caseloads. As a result, staff feel well supported, valued and part of the company community.

Leaders use sensible quality assurance processes to review, monitor and improve the quality of provision. Well-informed and experienced governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They support leaders to improve through robust challenge and follow up, providing advice and guidance from their considerable expertise. As a result, leaders know what they need to do to improve and feel supported to take action. For example, the governance board challenged leaders to adapt the teaching of functional skills to improve individual support for learners and apprentices, and as a result, achievement in these qualifications has improved.

Leaders recognise too many apprentices are passed, some significantly, the planned end date for their courses due to recruitment challenges. While leaders are now taking rapid action to resolve this issue, it is too early to judge the full impact of these steps.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure all apprentices benefit from high-quality support from staff so they can make the rapid progress of which they are capable and achieve within their planned periods of time.
- Ensure the actions in place for apprentices who are passed the planned end date are robustly monitored to sustain the continued improvement in timely achievement.
- Ensure that all learners and apprentices deepen their understanding of health and safety, equality and diversity and healthy relationships.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58467
Address	The Porter Building Office 219 2nd Floor 1 Brunel Way Slough SL1 1FQ
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Website	www.impactfutures.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Simon Rouse
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2018
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief operating officer, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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