

SC062288

Registered provider: Educare Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is part of a large organisation operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or a learning disability.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 November 2017

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people form warm and trusting relationships with child-focused staff.

- Young people like the comfortable home and the large garden. They are supported to personalise their own bedrooms.
- Staff work hard to enable young people to make progress in their educational, social and emotional development and independence.
- Enthusiastic staff enable young people to engage in a range of stimulating and fun activities.
- Staff provide young people with key-work sessions which address a wide range of issues that are important to young people.
- Vigilant staff keep young people safe. When young people go missing, staff search for them and carefully follow procedures.
- Staff talk to young people about how to keep themselves safe. As a result, risk-taking behaviour reduces.
- The new manager ensures that staff receive regular supervision and training.
- Staff have fully engaged in the PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy) therapeutic model of working and apply this to build increasingly positive relationships with young people.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people do not have regular meetings.
- A lack of careful matching of young people has sometimes led to the escalation of missing from home behaviours.
- Staff do not always undertake fire drills when directed.
- Some young people's files lack basic information, including contact details for professionals.
- The home could be made more homely.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/05/2016	Full	Good
02/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/09/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community. (Regulation 9 (1)(2)(a)(iii)) In particular, provide regular young people's meetings.	01/01/2018
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)) In particular, when matching young people, clearly analyse the impact for each young person in the home of any risks posed by the admission of a new young person and state how those risks are to be managed and reduced for all of the young people involved.	01/01/2018
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))	01/01/2018
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child and are kept up to date.	01/01/2018

Recommendations

- Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in a way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. This is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the children and value them as individuals. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
In particular, personalise the shared rooms in the home to provide a more welcoming environment.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people learn to trust adults, and they form warm, positive relationships with the staff. Dedicated and child-focused staff engage young people in valuable key-work sessions by listening to their views, wishes and feelings. Young people said that they like the staff and know that the staff really care about them. The home is comfortable, and one young person benefits hugely from playing in the large garden. One young person loves doing activities with staff, including rugby, football, snooker, Cubs and fishing. Another young person, who recently left the home, commented that staff took him golfing and that this is now a new interest for him.

Staff have recently cared for a number of very challenging young people who struggle to form relationships. They have enabled the young people to make progress in their education and their personal hygiene. Family relationships have improved for some young people before moving on to semi-independence. One young person has sustained his placement at the home longer than in any of his previous placements, and has benefited from the stability and significant emotional support provided by the sensitive staff. Another young person, who has recently returned to his family, said that staff helped him to 'get better' at managing his feelings and his behaviour. This has reduced his levels of violence and episodes of going missing from care. Staff have praised and rewarded him for helping to persuade a peer, who had been missing from care overnight, to return to the home.

Professionals are positive about the home. A clinical psychologist praised the staff for accepting one young person with significant personal hygiene issues. This acceptance enabled him to develop his trust in the staff team. In response, he eventually started taking showers and washing his clothes, which also resulted in an improvement in his emotional well-being.

The home could be made more homely, for example by displaying photographs of young

people and staff. Young people do not have the opportunity to share their views about the running of the home through regular young people's meetings.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Highly trained staff work hard to reduce the risks of young people going missing, being vulnerable to child sexual exploitation, self-harming, and using the internet. When young people go missing, staff follow the correct procedures by liaising closely with family members and other professionals, including the police, in an effort to find and protect them. Staff are skilled at de-escalation and have been able to ensure the safety of young people without the use of physical interventions. The staff team members use their in-depth knowledge of the impact of abuse and neglect on young people's emotional well-being and behaviour, together with the PACE method, to recognise possible triggers and to support positive behaviour.

Staff skilfully achieve a balance for young people between encouraging age-appropriate independence and keeping them safe. When young people are out of the home by themselves, staff maintain contact with them by mobile phone. Staff also complete welfare checks to ensure that young people are safe and well.

Staff undertake key-work sessions with young people in which they discuss relevant issues, for example internet safety and the risks of going missing. Key-work sessions are also used to discuss and reflect on incidents that have occurred, seeking feedback from young people. Staff keep young people safe and, as a result, they learn to manage their emotions and behaviour in order to keep themselves safe. The staff and manager regularly review and update the detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans.

On a daily basis, staff liaise effectively with their local police community support officer, schools and social workers. They exchange information and ensure that risks are identified and that agencies work together to protect the young people. The home is well maintained and safe. The locality risk assessment is up to date and relevant.

One area for improvement is that staff need to undertake fire drills promptly when they are due. Another is that when a young person is admitted, more analysis is needed of the risks of placing young people together. There should be clear identification of measures to manage and reduce identified risks, in order to keep all of the young people safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The previous registered manager resigned in July 2017 to take up a new post in the organisation. The new manager started in post shortly afterwards and has applied to be the registered manager. Staff either hold a level 3 qualification, are new in post, or are undertaking their level 3 diploma. All of the core staff team members are first aid trained.

The highly child-focused manager has ensured that staff receive regular supervision which encourages reflection. Staff training is up to date. Team meetings are well attended, and the minutes evidence a good level of participation. Staff work effectively as a team, as well as with a wide range of other professionals, including the police, drug and alcohol services, social workers, teachers and the in-house clinical team. The staff team advocates on behalf of young people. Staff members challenge placing authorities when young people's needs are not being met. Staff helped one young person to find accommodation in the specific area that he wanted, in order to make his move to semi-independence successful. Staff are currently working hard to engage a vulnerable young person who keeps going missing. They take every opportunity to engage with him, in order to understand and meet his emotional needs.

All of the staff at the home have recently undertaken PACE training, which they are using to good effect with young people. Staff consult with the in-house clinical team to ensure that they are using the model correctly and providing the maximum benefit for young people. This home has often cared for young people who exhibit very challenging behaviour, requiring staff to spend a lot of time responding to crises. The new manager is now seeking to admit young people who are at a stage in their development where they can benefit from a therapeutic approach. Impact risk assessments require more analysis of the impact on each of the young people when a new young person is admitted. They also need to include clear statements of how each young person's needs are to be met.

The staff engage young people in a range of challenging and valuable key-work sessions including, for example, family relationships, wishes and feelings, drugs and criminal behaviour. This work is recorded in detail and in a way that is helpful to staff and the young person. Although the young people's files are generally in good order, well written and up to date, some files have basic information missing, for example contact numbers and addresses for professionals. This is an area for improvement which will assist staff in meeting the needs of young people more efficiently.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC062288

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Educare Adolescent Services Limited

Registered provider address: Venture House, 12 Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Alan Davies

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

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