

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	02/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC062288
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Educare Adolescent Services Limited
Registered person address	Venture House, 12 Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, CANNOCK, Staffordshire, WS11 0LG

Responsible individual	Matthew Fisher
Registered manager	Tina Morten
Inspector	Louise Whittle

Inspection date	02/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 Requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. The registered manager and team have made significant improvements in many areas of the functioning of the home since the last inspection. The staff and young people have experienced considerable difficulties recently due to challenging behaviour from some young people. However, staff have worked effectively as a team and have supported young people to experience stability and to make progress. One young person has settled in, formed very positive and warm relationships with staff and is making significant progress in his education, preparing to take 11 GCSE exams. Staff support enables him to enjoy positive family contact and local friendships. Staff listen to young people, all of whom engage in the young people meetings once a week, where they express their views and receive feedback from the registered manager and staff. A programme of refurbishment has been underway, with new furniture and decorating improving parts of the house. However, there has been a setback due to some young people damaging the house and furniture. Two young people have struggled to settle since moving in before Christmas, which is, in part due to a lack of educational provision. This has led to them becoming bored and exhibiting increasingly challenging behaviour. The situation was made worse when two long-standing staff members, who had formed positive relationships with them, left the home for personal reasons. This unsettled the young people, one of whom has now left the home. Staff were unable to meet his complex needs in the absence of the structure of a school place. Despite staff working hard to address this and escalating their concerns within the local authority, they were unable to secure the appropriate education for him. Staff identified a school place for one young person, but then the school said they were oversubscribed for that year. Another young person was about to attend a pupil	

referral unit when the decision was made to refused to have him because of his behaviour.

Despite this situation, there is evidence that each young person has received personal attention from staff and that key work has taken place and has addressed important issues including how they can earn trust. Identity and diversity have been recognised and addressed, as has bullying. Staff have found a mechanics placement for one young person, which he thoroughly enjoys. Dedicated staff have sourced a range of local leisure activities for young people including youth clubs, football teams.

The registered manager has managed the home for the past nine months. She is undertaking her level 5 management qualification and has 8 years' experience of working with children in residential care, including one year as a manager. During the past nine months, she has taken the home from requires improvement to improved effectiveness. The registered manager took over a service, which was suffering from instability, unsafe practice and a lack of managerial challenge of other agencies, which were failing to provide services for young people. Having made significant improvements in all of these areas, she is still in the process of addressing them with a clear plan for continued improvement.

The registered manager has ensured that record keeping is now orderly and provides a valuable tool for staff to work with young people. Robust impact assessments are completed; risk assessments and behaviour management plans are regularly reviewed and updated. She has instigated a new system of consultation with young people, professionals, staff and family, which supports her monthly review of the quality of the service. She also regularly reviews the effectiveness of sanctions on young people behaviour.

The registered manager has responded quickly to recent staff changes and has recruited two new staff, with the involvement of the young people. Her use of agency staff has reduced and she has made efforts to limit the number of different staff coming into the home. The staffing situation has improved and the registered manager is working towards establishing a settled and stable staff team.

She is proactive, challenges other agencies and understands the strengths and weaknesses in her team. She has convened strategy meetings to address issues of concern for young people. The registered manager feels strongly supported by her own manager and this in turn has enabled her to make the undoubted progress that she has. Staff have regular supervision; staff training is up to date and includes additional training on bullying and trauma experienced by young people. Staff are now much clearer about bullying and are more vigilant with regard to behaviour that they observe in the home. Staff use team meetings to

communicate their thoughts and ideas about how to work with the young people. Staff and the registered manager fully understand the underlying issues for each young person whom they work hard to provide with consistent care.

There have been several incidents of damage to the home and threats to staff. However, staff have responded to these appropriately, avoiding young people being criminalised. Staff ensure that they follow protocols when young people go missing and young people have returned safe. They have effective links with the transport police who will look out for young people if they are away from the home without permission. They will also call the local library when young people go there alone and ensure that they are not able to access the internet. When incidents and accidents occur staff follow procedures, informing the relevant agencies and clearly recording their actions. The highly skilled staff undertaken key work sessions to address, for example, internet safety, bullying, independence, alcohol, trust, drugs and smoking in order to help young people understand how to keep themselves safe.

Staff work closely with social workers, the youth offending team, education and health professionals, therapists and the police. They also work with community organisations to source activities for young people. In recognition of one young person's significant identity issues, the registered manager made a referral to his local authority for life story work to be undertaken to support his emotional development and wellbeing. Staff and the registered manager seek feedback from professionals and family members in order to improve the experiences and progress of young people.

The registered manager's response to the many requirements from the previous inspection has been positive and thorough. She has met all of the requirements from the last inspection. This has resulted in staff feeling better prepared to undertake their roles in the context of an orderly, supportive and well-run service. Young people have benefitted from improved staff morale, a highly committed team and improved risk assessments, behaviour management planning. The structure of the home supports young people in their development and one young person says that he wants to stay here until he is 18 years old. The registered manager and dedicated team now need to consolidate these improvements in order to achieve their aim of driving up standards in this service.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is part of a large organisation operated by a private company. The home provides care for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or a learning disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/09/2015	CH - Full	Requires improvement
04/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
07/08/2014	CH - Full	Adequate

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 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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