

SC062288

Registered provider: Educare Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people aged between ten and 17 years old, who have complex needs and/or challenging behaviour.

The current manager has worked for the company since July 2018. She is currently working towards her level 5 qualification in leadership and management and has over 10 years' residential experience.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 March 2019

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 **requires improvement to be 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

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
In meeting the quality standards, if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c))	31/05/2019
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(viii))	31/05/2019
The health and well-being standard is that children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10(1)(b))	31/05/2019
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour. (Regulation 11(b))	31/05/2019
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23(1)(2)(c))	31/05/2019
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	31/05/2019

registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	
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. (Regulation 36(1)(a))	31/05/2019

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Staff should have the skills and confidence to communicate easily and understand the importance of listening to, involving and responding to the children they care for. Staff should understand that they have a responsibility to observe, notice and respond to children who are expressing their views, acknowledging that it is not the sole responsibility of the child to 'tell'. They should also understand how children might communicate their feelings through their behaviour, or non-verbally, especially where the child has a disability which does not allow them to communicate as others might. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are supported by staff who are passionate and try hard to help each young person to make progress to overcome their difficulties from their early childhood experiences.

Young people form good relationships with staff, and learn to trust and respect them over time.

Young people feel listened to and know how to raise a concern or make a complaint. However, staff do not always record young people's views, wishes and feelings to show how young people are helped to understand the decision-making process.

Two young people are continuing to do well at school and are making good progress in their learning. Another young person, who arrived at the home with a history of poor school attendance, is now successfully going to school full-time. This young person's social worker said, 'Education for (Name of the young person) has progressed due to the home supporting him.'

Despite the good progress being made by three young people, a fourth young person does not have a school placement. Staff have tried to create some educational activities in the interim period. However, the delay in securing a school placement has left the young person without adequate education, structure and routine.

Young people have access to a range of social activities within the local community. For example, two young people are members of local football clubs. This provides the young people with the opportunity to form and develop positive relationships with local friends.

Staff do promote some aspects of young people's health needs. However, staff have not supported young people to understand the impact and dangers of smoking. There are arrangements in place for managing medication, although these require improvement to ensure that medication that is no longer required is safely disposed of.

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

Young people who arrive with complex needs make good progress physically, emotionally and socially. One young person has made significant progress in improving their physical health as a result of the creative efforts of staff, who have worked closely with multi-agencies to ensure that the young person receives the right level of help and support.

Staff do not keep a detailed and accurate record about ongoing risks. Risk assessments are not always detailed and do not include evidence that the manager has reviewed the records.

Record-keeping is sometimes inconsistent and does not reflect the good practice that goes on to help young people understand social acceptance. For example, key-work records do not capture the work carried out by staff on sensitive topics such as racism and sexual harassment.

Sometimes the young people's behaviour can be complex and very challenging. Staff are proactive in providing balance between sanctions and rewards. Staff encourage young

people to develop new coping skills and to take responsibility for their actions.

Staff are trained in using physical restraint and de-escalation techniques. Staff used their de-escalation skills to disarm a young person who was armed with a knife. This prevented the young person from hurting himself or others. However, on one occasion staff took the decision not to use physical restraint and instead locked themselves in the office. This resulted in the young person causing significant damage to his bedroom.

The police regularly visit the home and work with the young people to help them to understand the dangers of anti-social behaviours.

Some parts of the home lack a warm, personal and 'homely' environment. For example, one bedroom has been left dirty, despite the young person leaving the home over a week ago. Young people's bathrooms have not been sufficiently cleaned.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The pace of progress in meeting previous requirements has been too slow. The registered manager has not acted swiftly enough to address shortfalls. This means that there are ongoing shortfalls in the cleanliness of the environment and in case files.

Since the last inspection, there has been an increased reliance on using agency staff to cover staff sickness. To reduce the impact of having different staff in the home, the registered manager has tried hard to ensure that the same agency staff are used.

Staff are safely recruited and provided with an in-depth induction and training. This helps to ensure that staff are able to understand their roles and can develop their skills further to meet the needs of young people in their care.

The registered manager and staff do not always receive frequent supervision in line with the organisation's policies and procedures. This leaves staff without support and guidance to enable them to reflect on their practice.

The registered manager is not always consistent in reviewing and monitoring the service.

The registered manager's assessment of young people's compatibility is sometimes not well thought through. This has left some young people vulnerable and has resulted in some young people's placements ending earlier than planned.

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: Tina Morten

Registered manager: Cara Wood

Inspectors

Sarah Junor-Fitzpatrick, social care inspector
Patrick McIntosh, social care inspector

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