

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	02/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC371723
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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	Barry Eannetta
Registered manager	Dale Carpenter
Inspector	Louise Whittle

Inspection date	02/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC371723

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people enjoy a welcoming, spacious and well-maintained home in a rural environment. They personalise their rooms and benefit from the peace and quiet, which enables them to think and focus on their own needs.
- Sensitive, child-focused staff understand the complex experiences and emotional needs of the young people, and support them effectively to settle in.
- Staff consult young people, who are able to make a positive contribution to decisions about their own care and about the home.
- Highly trained and skilled staff keep vulnerable young people safe and work with them to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Young people make significant and sustained progress in their education, behaviour, physical and emotional well-being.
- Young people benefit from opportunities to learn new skills and take responsibility, which supports their confidence and self-esteem.
- Staff work closely with a wide range of professionals to ensure that they meet the needs of young people on all levels.
- A change of registered manager in the past eight months has led to high levels of staff morale and stability, which ensures that young people receive consistent care.
- The registered manager is highly experienced and proactive. His hands-on approach to working with young people enables him to have an in-depth understanding of their individual backgrounds, care plans and needs.
- While staff listen to young people, one young person said that staff did not take a personal concern she raised seriously enough.

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

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 (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
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard (2) The standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) ensure that staff— (ii) help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; (iii) help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child.	30/09/16

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to care for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home's statement of purpose describes crisis intervention, short-, medium- and long-term placements for children aged 10 to 17.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/09/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
21/07/2015	Full	Good
22/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/05/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people enjoy a homely environment that is spacious and well maintained and has a large garden. Staff, who provide a warm welcome, encourage young people to feel relaxed and settled. Young people trust staff and actively seek them out for emotional and practical support. Their rooms are personalised and they are able to benefit from the peace and safety of the rural location. This setting can be a challenge to some young people from inner city areas, but they comment on how good it is to be away from all their past issues and to have time to think about their own needs. Young people say that they enjoy the country views and the wildlife. Sensitive staff address individual identity and cultural needs by taking some young people to more culturally diverse areas to shop for food or hair products. A staff member from another home shares the ethnic origins of two young people and visits to support them. Staff support one young person to attend church when she wishes. Family contact is highly valued by staff and young people are able to enjoy this with the support of staff who transport them long distances and undertake supervision. Dedicated staff have enabled one young person to have sibling contact at the home, thereby providing a highly enjoyable experience for the family. Proactive staff have identified a local boxing club and encouraged young people to become involved to great effect. Young people attend the club on a very regular basis and have achieved awards. Some now take responsibility for tutoring younger children. They thoroughly enjoy this sport and benefit from the physical activity, social interaction, responsibility, and improved self-esteem and confidence. All the young people get up early in the mornings, and are active and engaged. One young person has achieved an ice skating award. They have warm and trusting relationships with staff and like to engage in banter and in fun days out. They are looking forward to a seaside holiday this summer. Young people also enjoy cycling, running, walking, cooking, artwork and board games with the active staff team. Young people are making exceptional and sustained progress in independence skills, education and managing their emotions and behaviour. One young person has progressed from not attending education to virtual and now mainstream school. Another young person has 100% attendance at virtual school and has now enrolled in college for September. They are ambitious for the future and staff	

enthusiastically support and encourage this ambition. One young person wants to learn to drive so that she can become a midwife, and staff have helped her apply for her provisional driving licence. Staff consistently praise young people for their hard work in making these positive changes in their lives.

Staff consult young people individually and in regular young people's meetings. They feel that they are able to contribute positively to the running of the home and that staff listen to them. Staff have responded positively to requests by young people to have singing lessons and to join a local rugby club.

One young person, however, feels that staff do not always believe that she is telling the truth. Staff need to address this concern with her, help her to express her feelings and identify how to reassure her.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
All the young people have been subject to child sexual exploitation, and some to involvement in gangs, drugs and running away. The stability and security of this home have removed all of these pressures. Young people feel safe and do not go missing. One young person has stated that she will not run away, not because of the remote location, but because she does not want to ruin the progress she has made. Staff are highly trained in safeguarding and understand the reasons behind challenging behaviour. They provide the boundaries and guidance that enable young people to get better at managing their own behaviour. Staff quickly and skilfully de-escalate challenging behaviour, using humour and clear expectations. Physical restraint is seldom required and then only as a last resort to keep young people and staff safe. The registered manager and staff produce impact assessments, risk assessments and behaviour management plans, which are thorough and effective. Staff regularly review and update risk assessments, and involve young people in their behaviour management plans. Staff proactively engage young people in key-worker sessions on a wide range of issues, which contributes to their understanding of risk and how to keep themselves safe. The issues include bullying, relationships, drugs, behaviour, care plans and fire safety. Staff work with young people regarding situations that place them at risk, but they understand the importance of establishing stability and trust before addressing personal experiences in depth. Staff work with the company's clinical team to ensure that they receive the correct	

training to enable them to help young people to manage their emotional well-being and behaviour. The emphasis on physical activity is highly beneficial to young people, helping them to regulate their moods and therefore behaviour. This contributes to their safety both now and in future.

Staff recruitment is safe and they work closely with a wide range of professionals including social workers, education and the police to ensure the safety of young people. Staff provide internet safety by ensuring that safeguards and restrictions are in place, and by not allowing young people to have unsupervised internet access.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager holds a level 4 qualification in social care, a Registered Managers Award and a foundation degree in therapeutic child care. He has many years of experience in social care. He also manages another home nearby, which is judged as good. Four of the six staff hold level 3 qualifications and two newly appointed members are currently undertaking the qualification. All staff hold first aid certificates. The registered manager replaced the previous registered manager in December. This followed an interim inspection, which highlighted significant safeguarding issues in the running of the home and a reliance on agency staff. Staff morale was very low. Since the previous registered manager resigned, the current registered manager has made significant progress in improving the service. He has created a stable and supportive staff team, which provides consistent care to young people whom he has skilfully matched. The registered manager manages the home well, having put in place efficient recording and working systems. He has empowered staff to take ownership of, and pride in, the home and they are now confident to work independently when he is away managing the other home. The registered manager ensures that he is fully aware of events and issues at the home. He has created a relaxed and happy home where young people are making good progress. He ensures that staff are up to date with all the relevant training, and he has recently identified specialist child sexual exploitation training. This is to enable staff's responses to young people to be even more effective. The registered manager is 'hands on' with young people, who clearly trust him and actively seek his company. The staff speak very positively of each other and of the quality of management.	

The registered manager provides staff with regular supervision that is both supportive and challenging. Staff say that he actively seeks their ideas and suggestions, making them feel included in decisions about the home. They say that they can confidently approach him with any issues or concerns.

Liaison with other agencies is a strength in the team, and working together is benefiting young people by ensuring that staff identify and meet their needs. Staff liaise with health, education, social workers, police and therapists. They also proactively advocate on young people's behalf. The company's clinical team works effectively with staff to review young people and help them support their mental health needs. The clinical team also provides personal support staff who work with young people's very complex experiences and behaviours.

The registered manager is constantly reviewing systems and work practices to make them more relevant and effective. He uses all the skills in his team, including managerial skills, thereby supporting the efficient running of the home. Communication is clear and there is no duplication of paperwork. The registered manager undertakes regular reviews of the service and gives consultation papers to childcare professionals, young people and parents. He uses feedback to inform the future development of the service and constantly strives to drive up standards. The registered manager recognises that the staff have been on a developmental journey over the past few months and is proud that he has retained most of the original staff group, whom he values highly. He also recognises that he and the team have further work to do in order to continue to improve the service.

Social workers say, 'The staff are extremely supportive and have great communication', 'The staff are very professional. They do an excellent job' and 'The young person has made significant changes thanks to the dedication and investments of all staff. I cannot praise this place enough.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 that 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 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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