

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	21/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC371723
Type of inspection	Full
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	Philip Johnson
Inspector	Louise Whittle

Inspection date	21/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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:

- Highly skilled, experienced and child- focused staff provide young people with care which effectively meets their complex needs. Staff consistently work to enable young people achieve and sustain progress in forming warm relationships with staff and each other. This helps them to manage their emotions and behaviour, which in turn supports their educational achievement, and life skills.
- Staff have an in-depth understanding of the emotional and psychological basis of young people's behaviour. They work enthusiastically with young people to help them learn to recognise risks and keep themselves safe. Young people feel safe and protected, even when there is a crisis, which, for example, relates to the behaviour of other young people within the home.
- Staff are trained to a high standard in the broad range of the skills that are required to meet the young people's needs. They request and receive additional training when a new issue arises, such as the needs of a young person on the autistic spectrum. Staff feel well prepared to carry out their roles competently and are strongly supported in this by the registered manager and by their colleagues.
- The registered manager has made significant improvements in the running of the home, the morale of the staff and consequently, the care provided to young people, since taking up the post a year ago. Staff, young people's parents, and child care professionals recognise and praise his strong, clear leadership and effective management style.
- An area for improvement relates to the need for the registered manager to challenge the local authority when educational provision is not forthcoming, as has recently been the case for one young person.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation:

Ensure that staff act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. The registered person should consider the use of an independent advocate (see paragraph 4.16) if the child's needs are not being met. This relates specifically to ensuring that there is immediate challenge and escalation to the local authority where education is not being provided for a child. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 12, paragraph 2.8)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered for 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 years on admission.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/01/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/05/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
20/01/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress
22/05/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people are settled and happy living here and talk affectionately of the staff. One young person described the Registered Manager as, 'fabulous'. Another wrote a thank you card to the staff after a difficult few days, saying: 'Thank you for all your support through the previous week and helping to get me back on track,' and: 'you all deserve some credit and I will always try my best to accept your help'. Young people enjoy looking after the home, including planting flowers to brighten up the garden and helping with the shopping. This is a reflection of them feeling a sense of ownership. They have chosen colours and pictures for their rooms and have requested a games room and barbeque for the garden, which the staff hope to provide. Staff enthusiastically support young people to enjoy their leisure time, dressing up to attend superhero conventions and taking them to see the latest films. Equally, young people are able to relax and 'chill' when they want to. There is a karaoke machine, which is of particular interest to one young person who enjoys rock music. This encourages them to have fun together. Young people say that staff listen to them and give their wishes, feelings and views thorough consideration. One young person commented: 'staff help us out with things we need and to achieve goals and earn what we want.' And, 'They definitely listen'. The progress that young people make is positive and sustained because highly skilled and committed staff work sensitively with very complex and challenging issues, such as self-harm and violence. Young people's increased engagement in school work and progress in their personal and emotional development is evidence of how well staff meet their needs. Young people themselves recognise that they are making progress and they benefit from praise and the positive regard of the staff. Parents and child care professionals are extremely positive about the progress and experiences of the young people. One social worker said: 'she's a very complex child and the home is meeting her care needs.' And: 'If the young person is upset because she wants to see her family, the home staff will call the social worker'. Another professional commented: ' people run away from his problems, but he is thriving here- it's absolutely brilliant for him because of what they do'. A parent said: ' they meet his needs and beyond- they can't help him enough.'	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The highly trained and experienced staff ensure that young people are kept safe. They protect young people from volatile situations in the home with peers, and key working sessions address safety. Young people feel safe and understand that the staff want to protect them. The home worked with the local authority when they identified additional potential risks to provide therapeutic input for one young person. Staff hope that this will also enhance their understanding of some behaviours and thereby increase the effectiveness of their safeguarding practice. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans are reviewed and updated regularly. This ensures that potentially dangerous situations are avoided or are managed in the most appropriate and sensitive way for each young person as an individual. Incidents of self-harm, missing from care and aggressive behaviour have reduced since the last inspection. Strong links with the local police and good relationships with neighbours increase the ability of the staff to protect young people and work positively with them to protect themselves. The Registered manager ensures that he updates the locality risk assessment in order to more effectively address issues like child sexual exploitation. Staff safeguarding training reflects the broad range of safeguarding issues and needs of the young people.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The registered manager has been in this post since August 2014. He holds a level 3 qualification in health and social care and a level 5 Diploma in leadership. He has made significant improvements in the past year, taking the service from adequate to good with his clear and effective leadership and management style. Young people have benefitted from the changes that he has made to the house, which is now welcoming and attractive. The registered manager's understanding of the staff has enabled him to be highly effective in creating a culture of support and challenge, leading to a confident and strongly motivated staff team.	

Staff members say of the registered manager that when he came here he: 'added structure and things fell into place quite quickly'. And: 'it is unbelievably different now, he is driven to make sure young people are safe and staff work well'. 'The running of the home has improved in all ways – it is a lot more structured and there are clear guidelines'. One staff member commented, 'I love it- every day is different, the staff team is amazing- we all support and help each other.'

The staff receive sound core training and additional training which enhances their understanding of and ability to meet young people's needs. Training is up to date and relevant. Recording systems are clear and accessible and staff work together confidently and with a child focus.

The registered manager provides staff with regular good quality supervision. Staff meetings enable them to develop their knowledge as well as contribute to the effectiveness of the service with ideas and challenges. His hard work has resulted in staff understanding their roles and the aims of the service and enjoying working here.

He is very child focused and is particularly aware of the impact of peer relationships on their progress and stability. He is committed to giving priority to the needs of those already living at the home, when identifying and admitting new young people.

The registered manager has positively addressed the recommendations in the previous Ofsted inspection report, relating to consultation with young people, parents and social work professionals and continuity of staffing.

Whilst the team has experienced a number of unavoidable staff changes, the registered manager has ensured that the impact of this on young people has been minimal. He has done additional shifts himself and used staff from another nearby home who are well known to all. He is in the process of employing new staff members who he hopes will be able to commit to the service in the long term and offer increased continuity for young people.

The registered manager is highly effective at communicating with young people, parents, and professionals. He is in the process of consulting with them via questionnaires and dialogue and plans to incorporate this feedback in his reviews of the quality of service, in order to drive up standards for young people.

He is highly committed to young people's education and has worked hard to ensure that the majority of the young people are receiving appropriate educational input. The service could be further improved, by the registered manager challenging local authorities at higher management levels on behalf of the young people, when educational provision is not forthcoming, as has recently been the case for one young person.

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 looked after children 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 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 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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