

SC371723

Registered provider: Educare Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to care for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 6 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Young people form exceptionally warm and trusting relationships with staff and the registered manager.
- Young people benefit from the firm structure and boundaries in the home and these give them a strong sense of security.
- Young people make and sustain significant progress beyond all expectations.
- Child-focused and perceptive staff provide young people with excellent care so that their individual needs are met well.
- Enthusiastic staff help young people to have fun.
- Staff are ambitious for young people and seek out opportunities for them to develop skills and interests.
- Staff use research-based practice to help them communicate with and provide strong support to young people.
- Vulnerable young people become increasingly safe in their placements. Incidents of missing and self-harm reduce.
- Highly trained staff work closely with young people to understand how to keep themselves safe. They skilfully involve young people to help them find their own solutions to managing risk.
- Creative staff have developed a range of materials to use with young people, which help them understand how to keep themselves safe from child sexual exploitation and harmful relationships.
- When young people go missing from home, staff take immediate action by following the young person to try to make sure that the young person stays safe.
- The registered manager is highly experienced. He expects high standards of practice from his staff and provides them with strong and consistent leadership.
- The registered manager uses feedback from young people, parents, professionals and staff to evaluate the service and to drive up standards.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Some staff do not receive supervision as frequently as they should.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/08/2016	Full	Good
15/09/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
21/07/2015	Full	Good

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 registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff receive regular supervision.	29/10/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people say that they love living at this home and speak very positively about the staff. Young people quickly develop exceptionally trusting relationships with the dedicated staff who provide them with a strong sense of security. Nurturing staff reduce young people's anxieties and enable them to focus on their own needs. Highly vulnerable young people enjoy a family atmosphere. This is enhanced by visits from the registered manager's dog, Bobby. The young people love to play with him and take him for walks in the countryside. The home is furnished and decorated to a high standard; it is comfortable and well maintained. The large kitchen provides a focal point for the home where staff and young people sit and eat, chat and exchange jokes. Young people play music, sing and have fun together with staff.

When young people are distressed and worried, they feel able to go to sensitive staff for emotional and practical support. They seek hugs and time alone with staff if they are upset. Young people benefit significantly from receiving praise from staff. This supports their self-esteem, and is central to the care that they receive and the progress that they make. Staff notice achievements, no matter how small, and highlight these to the young people on a daily basis. This boosts young people's confidence. One young person told staff that she had never been praised for anything before and explained how valuable this was for her. Another young person commented that staff, 'Will spend as much time talking with you as you want.'

Young people make significant and sustained progress, beyond all expectations. One young person has made positive changes to her emotional well-being and her ability to manage her behaviour within just a few weeks of moving in. Her parent said that he is, 'More than impressed and happy with what they have done with a small amount of

input.' He explained that he has seen 'profound change' in his daughter's views. This young person has written a letter about her experience of arriving and settling at the home. She states: 'When I arrived I pleaded with my social worker not to leave me here. I soon learned that running away from my problems wasn't gonna [sic] get me anywhere and they will soon catch up with me. I've now been here for two months and I like it. The staff are lovely and the other young people aren't bad either. Looking back now, I kick myself for not listening at the start.' This letter is now included in the young people's guide to provide comfort and inspiration to other young people when they arrive.

Staff strongly support young people with their interests and aspirations. Staff research and make enquiries for young people who, for example, have expressed interest in joining swimming groups and football clubs. One young person has recently undertaken her Duke of Edinburgh award. These activities and achievements support young people's physical, social and emotional development. When young people see their families, the staff enable them to welcome their relatives to the home and enjoy activities such as cooking a meal together. A parent who visited the home recently described it as, 'A good place full of good people, very genuine with a sense of community.' Highly perceptive staff enable young people to feel supported before, during and after contact. One parent commented, 'She doesn't like rules but is sticking to them here; this is what she needs, she has calmed down a lot.' Another parent said, 'I'm delighted with the home.'

Young people have made significant progress. They attend and achieve in their education. They develop emotional resilience, enjoy positive family contact and develop socially. One young person has taken all of her GCSEs at a local school and has gained a college place to study hair and beauty. Another young person has a place at college to study childcare, and another is keen to start school after the holidays and has aspirations to be a vet. A young person who had been deeply untrusting of people before her placement recently left, having made friends in the area and in the home.

Young people develop good independence skills. When young people leave, moves are planned well and sensitively. Staff accompany young people to see their new accommodation and help them to get to know the area that they are moving to. Young people know that staff are there for them after they leave and that they will continue to be supported. Young people who are preparing for independence engaged in completing an excellent workbook, which staff have creatively devised, called 'Are you ready'. This book helps young people to identify their concerns about becoming independent and to research solutions to reduce their anxieties. One particularly valuable question in the book is, 'Is anything worrying you about your emotional and behavioural needs?'

Young people express their views, wishes and feelings confidently and engage in the weekly young people's meetings where they discuss activities, menus and any issues they want to raise. Proactive staff have enabled one young person to access her independent reviewing officer online. Staff offer young people access to advocacy services and young people know how to make a complaint.

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

The young people living at this home are highly vulnerable and at risk of child sexual exploitation. They have histories of going missing and of failing to respond to rules and boundaries. Caring staff say that their aim is to give young people 'reasons not to run away'. This approach is very successful and makes young people exceptionally safe. Young people do not go missing to the same extent that they have in the past. Consequently, they are at far less risk of sexual exploitation. All of the young people say that they are definitely safer since moving to the home. Incidents of self-harm have also reduced. The social worker for one young person commented that the young person now listens to staff and, 'Takes their advice on board.'

Highly trained, skilled and experienced staff receive relevant safeguarding training covering issues including child sexual exploitation, self-harm, trauma and radicalisation. Safeguarding is central to all aspects of their work with young people, and staff use research-based practice to maximise the impact of key-work sessions. The PACE model (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) is highly effective in building trust with young people who engage with staff in conversations about keeping themselves safe. These positive relationships enable young people to talk to staff about difficult issues in their lives that have made them vulnerable and at risk. Staff skilfully engage young people in their own risk assessments by asking them to identify behaviours and triggers and describing what helps them to calm down or make safe decisions.

Staff have impressive insight into young people's past experiences. Staff really understand the impact of these experiences on young people's emotional well-being, their ability to make decisions and their ability to manage their own behaviour. By getting to know young people well, staff are able to anticipate triggers to their behaviour. This allows them to de-escalate situations that may lead to young people self-harming or running away. When young people become distressed, for example by being let down by a family member, staff are alert to the negative impact of this disappointment and quickly respond to the individual needs of the young people. This vigilance and proactivity enables staff to avoid or de-escalate challenging behaviour triggered by painful events. Staff are adept at using humour and emotional warmth to prevent young people from behaving in ways that place them at risk of harm.

If young people do leave the house without the agreement of staff, staff follow them. They work closely with the police, the young people's social workers and families to share information. This ensures that the young person is found as quickly as possible. Staff follow clear safeguarding procedures and protocols. The registered manager regularly reviews the very detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans to make sure that staff have valuable, up-to-date information about changing levels of risk.

Staff have prepared excellent written materials (in collaboration with the in-house psychologists) to engage young people to help them understand how to keep themselves safe. Specifically, they have devised a workbook and worksheets outlining the dangers of child sexual exploitation and focusing on relationships. These resources are child-friendly and colourful. The materials provide young people with 'red flags', such

as having to tell a man more than once to stop, and how to identify 'Mr wrong', who shouts, and makes you feel ugly and useless. Staff have also researched what young people need to understand about internet safety and have designed their own internet safety work sheets which are clear and easy to read and remember.

Young people and families are clear that staff keep young people safe. One young person said that staff have talked to her about keeping safe, being careful on the internet, not meeting older men and other areas of risk. She considers that she is, 'definitely much safer' than when she came. The brother of one young person said that his sister is, 'well safe' at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager holds a level 4 qualification in social care, a registered manager's 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 by Ofsted to be good. Since becoming the registered manager of this home, he has developed the service from inadequate to outstanding.

This home is run very well. Records are detailed and provide staff with access to the information that they need to provide excellent care for young people. Staff receive up-to-date, relevant training which equips them to confidently undertake their roles. The home has had a busy summer; one member of staff has left and some agency staff have been used to cover annual leave. The registered manager has ensured that the same agency staff have been used so that young people receive consistent care by staff who are familiar to them. The registered manager has submitted an application to Ofsted to increase the number of children who can live at the home from three to four. The registered manager is fully aware that additional staff will be required in order to meet the needs of four young people.

The registered manager is very experienced and provides his team with strong leadership and support. He is also strongly child-focused. Young people like and trust him. Staff are professional and their practice is excellent. Staff are particularly skilled at engaging young people. Staff use the research-informed PACE therapeutic care model, and are booked to have further training. Staff have access to a wide range of training to support their practice. They are closely involved in the running of the home, contributing ideas in team meetings, informal discussions and supervision. Staff comment that the registered manager has high expectations of them and encourages them to use their initiative and make appropriate decisions. The registered manager gathers feedback from young people, staff, families and professionals to inform his review of the service and drive up standards further.

Staff work very effectively with social workers, family members, education, police and health services to ensure that young people's needs are identified and met. Dedicated staff and the registered manager advocate strongly on behalf of young people and challenge placing authorities when they consider that young people are not being listened to or are not receiving the support that they need. One parent commented, 'The

manager is very insightful and knows his job.' A family member explained that staff are, 'very welcoming.'

Staff supervision is frequently not completed. This means that staff do not have a regular opportunity to reflect on their work and to address any concern with the registered manager. However, the impact of this shortfall is reduced because staff frequently speak to the registered manager about any emerging concerns and get the support they need to make safe decisions about young people's care.

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: SC371723

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: Dale Carpenter

Inspector

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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