

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066565
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Registered person	New Options Limited
Registered person address	Turnpike Gate House Alcester Heath ALCESTER Warwickshire B49 5JG
Responsible individual	Graham Baker
Registered manager	POST VACANT / Joanne Carter
Date of last inspection	11/12/2014

Inspection date	11/03/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

Since the last inspection, the manager who has been in post since December 2014 is now registered with Ofsted. She is committed to fulfilling her role and responsibilities in a clear and decisive manner that is intended to raise standards in the home. This is very important due to the high levels of vulnerability and complex needs that the young people with autism present. A significant amount of investment has been put into building and stabilising the management infrastructure. This has strengthened the leadership and management in the home. The Registered Manager has good support mechanisms that consist of senior management and a fully formed management team that now integrates social care, education and clinical expertise. Internal and external monitoring systems, improvement and development plans in place underpin the improvement agenda. This system also satisfies one of the recommendations made at the last inspection. Overall, management of the service continues to embed the changes and is yet to have the full desired impact. This is reflected in the steps taken so far to address all of the six requirements and two recommendations made at the last inspection.

The Registered Manager has completed a three monthly quality review of the service and the report has been sent to Ofsted. This enables the regulator to monitor the quality of the services provided to young people and respond to any concerns. The monthly independent visits identify the home's strengths and areas for improvement. However, the visitor has not confirmed following the visits whether young people are effectively safeguarded. They have also not formed a view on whether the conduct of the home promotes young people's wellbeing. This requirement is repeated.

Young people's behaviour management plans are under review to ensure they appropriately meet young people's needs. However, where applicable, young

people's behaviour management plans do not evidence how effective behaviour management strategies progressively result in less restrictive practices. This requirement is repeated.

Since the last inspection in December 2014, a system has been established to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping. Consequently, this has identified weaknesses that the manager is responsive to and continues to improve. For example, the newly enhanced placement plans intend to incorporate young people's holistic needs. The document has been endorsed by the management team and its implementation is shortly anticipated. Staff training is scheduled to support the team to make best use of the plans to promote high quality, child-focussed care planning. Young people's needs arising from their ethnic origin, cultural and linguistic background have now been clarified. The information is due to be integrated into their new placement plans. This supports the staff to holistically meet young people's diverse needs. It also enables the staff team to consider when to request external advice and support so the appropriate responses can be made.

Progress has been made to improve recruitment practices. Positive action has been taken to ensure that the reason why an applicant's employment or position ended is verified. This ensures a robust system that prevents vulnerable young people from having access to adults who may pose a serious risk to them.

The frequency of staff supervision has improved. This allows the staff to reflect on their roles and responsibilities and helps them to deliver a service that meets the high expectations of the service. New staff are guided into their role and responsibilities by experienced staff who act as their mentors. This additional support mechanism models good practice, provides advice and promotes staff retention.

No children and young people are at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and no young people have gone missing. One allegation of a safeguarding nature has been investigated in conjunction with the local authority designated officer (LADO). This matter has reached its conclusion. The lessons learned are being followed up through supervision with the staff involved and by way of further discussions with the LADO about the process. A second, manager-led investigation about the conduct of some night staff has been concluded. Management action points for staff, have been implemented. These interventions promote young people's safety and welfare and stamps out poor practice over time.

Young people continue to make steady progress and relate positively with the staff who care for them. Their health needs are well attended to. This ensures that they maintain a healthy lifestyle and have good access to health professionals when they need it. A reduction in medication errors means that the administration and monitoring of their medication is safe.

Young people have excellent educational attendance at school. They also benefit

from progressive attainment levels from their starting points. Improved communication between the home and school staff develops joined up work practices that support young people to overcome any barriers to their success. Regular educational reviews promote continuity of care and inform all parties about young people's progress. This gives all young people opportunities to reach their potential.

Most staff have welcomed the higher expectations that the new leadership and management commands in the home. Some staff have left and this has paved the way for new staff. The vacant positions are currently being filled by agency staff who are known to the young people. Professional stakeholders are positive about the quality of care and the management of the home. A social worker reported that the new manager appears to have made a difference and is 'on the ball', wanting to make changes and improve communication. This demonstrates capacity for the home to improve and make a positive difference to the lives of the young people.

No further requirements or recommendations have been made following this inspection.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care, accommodation and education for children. The home offers a specialised service to 26 children and young people with autism.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2014	Full	adequate
18/03/2014	Interim	good progress
04/07/2013	Full	good
13/11/2012	Interim	good progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there; and make proper provision for the care, education, supervision and, where appropriate, treatment, of children accommodated there. Specifically review restrictive behaviour management practices in the home and comply with young people's behaviour management plans (Regulation 11 (1) (a) (b))	30/04/2015
33 (2001)	ensure the independent person interviews with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home in order to form an opinion as to whether children accommodated are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the	30/04/2015

	home promotes their wellbeing (Regulation 33 (8) (a) & (b))	
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What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.