

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC398385
Inspector	Dawn Bennett
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Young Options College Limited
Registered person address	Turnpike Gate House Alcester Heath Alcester Warwickshire B49 5JG
Responsible individual	Graham Baker
Registered manager	Stewart George Hogg
Date of last inspection	23/12/2013

Inspection date	11/07/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The Registered Manager and staff team provide sensitive care that addresses the needs of each young person. Staff have regular discussions with young people and include their views and wishes in planning for their daily routines and personal arrangements. Staff provide stability and emotional support to young people and create lots of opportunities for them to progress. Staff practice is positive and proactive when approaching difficulties young people experience or encounter. As a result, young people feel safe in the home and know that staff care about them.

Young people are confident about expressing their views about the quality of care in the home. Some young people make excellent progress and have developed skills and relationships that will support them to continue to succeed in the future.

Staff work hard to promote the safety and well-being of young people. A key strength of this staff team is their liaison skills with external professionals. This enhances the safety of young people and the community they live in. For example, well-established partnerships with the youth offending service and police mean that young people experience clear consequences for poor behaviour as well as opportunities for reparation and rehabilitation.

The staff team have good insight into the strengths and weakness of the home and

continue to drive forward improvements to the service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a large private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate up to three young people, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/12/2013	Full	adequate
04/11/2013	Full	inadequate
19/03/2013	Interim	good progress
11/09/2012	Full	outstanding

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people's needs in relation to their good health and well-being are effectively met. Prior to any young person being admitted to the home, care is taken to ensure the home can meet the young person's health requirements. Where appropriate, staff receive additional, more specialist training. Once a young person is living at the home they are quickly supported to register with and access health professionals. Staff actively help raise young people's awareness around areas linked to smoking, drug abuse, alcohol consumption, relationships, diet and exercise. Because of this, young people can make informed lifestyle choices and see how decisions they make can impact on their own health.

Education is central to the daily routines in the home. Young people attend the organisation's own school or mainstream schools. If a young person has been out of education prior to living at the home they benefit from an intensive assessment of their educational needs at the organisation's school. This enables young people to re-engage with education at a curriculum stage that reflects their skills and abilities. Wherever possible the home will then support them to move from the organisation's school into a mainstream school. The staff team develops positive relationships with these schools and ensure young people receive all the support they require, including additional tuition, to successfully take exams and progress onto further education. As a result, young people have outstanding attendance and are making excellent academic progress. For example, a young person has received a number of college offers as well as an offer from her mainstream school to continue with her education. Young people clearly understand the positive impact education will have on their future development and want to proceed onto university.

Consultation with young people is central to the routines in the home. Young people participate in regular young people's meetings and keywork sessions. As a result, young people's views and opinions shape the development of the home. They take part in a wide range of activities including martial arts, holidays abroad and regular contact with their friends in the local community, including sleep-overs. They are involved in events in the local and wider community. For example, one young person is about to participate in the National Citizen Challenge which involves six weeks of voluntary work. Young people are encouraged and supported by the staff team to achieve and all successes are celebrated. For example, one young person has recently celebrated her fourth anniversary of living at the home with a meal out. She also attended her placing authority's Celebration of Achievements Awards 2014 where she got two prizes, one for her schooling and one for the length of her placement. This means young people experience a sense of inclusion and this further promotes their well-being.

Young people maintain contact with their families whilst living in the home and are

supported to develop their wider social relationships with others. Staff are skilled at working in partnership with families. For example, the staff team and parents recently worked together to ensure one young person's prom was a really special day. Everyone was involved at every stage. Consequently, young people are empowered to make positive decisions regarding the people that they have contact with and form long-term relationships.

Quality of care

good

Young people experience good support from staff who help identify goals and actions needed for them to make progress in their lives. Staff regularly engage young people in discussions about their wishes, feelings and daily life events. For example, when a young person talked about her first day at the home she stated: 'staff listened to me and comforted me.' Staff consistently encourage young people to talk about their progress and the challenges they wish to overcome along with the help they need to do this. Achievements are celebrated when young people move away from negative or harmful patterns of behaviour or when a young person has experienced success.

Young people are supported to participate in planning for their futures and are involved in meetings where they can actively express their views and opinions. Young people who have lived at the home for a significant length of time now use the skills and confidence they have learnt to advocate very effectively for themselves. Professionals who know the service well state that staff are good communicators and are child-centred. Staff act as good role models in helping young people become successful in all aspects of their lives. Young people clearly understand what staff are trying to help them achieve and state that the staff team is a key strength of this home.

Staff keep clear records of all health appointments and interventions so they can monitor each young person's health and well-being. Arrangements for the storage and administration of medication are safe, and meet young people's needs. Where young people have complex health needs staff liaise with health professionals to ensure practice in place is beneficial to young people's good health.

Young people appreciate the work staff put into creating a safe, warm and welcoming home. One young person described moving into the home and finding her bedroom had been painted her favourite colour and had a television to match. Young people decorate and arrange their bedrooms according to their choices, interests and needs. Staff encourage young people to respect each other's privacy and address any incidents when young people are in conflict with each other. Young people enjoy and have access to a range of communal rooms that are comfortable, well-furnished and personalised.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Young people are safe in the home and feel safe. They know who they can speak to if they are unhappy or concerned about something, including being able to talk to someone outside the home if needed.

Since the last inspection a young person was admitted to the home with a history of going absent and missing from care. There was a clear expectation that the number of incidents would reduce because of the experienced staff team and the location of the home. While he lived at the home the staff team worked effectively with the police, youth offending team and local safeguarding team to educate the young person and change his patterns of behaviour. They praise the staff team highly for their hard work and proactive communication with partnership agencies.

Unfortunately interventions were not effective and the number of missing episodes in March and April were high. As a result notice was served on the placement by the company. Since this young person has left the home there have been no missing from care events. Staff practice is robust, effective and well established in terms of promoting young people's safety and keeping them engaged. Young people know and understand that if they leave the home without permission prompt and early action will be taken to determine their whereabouts and to secure their safe return.

Staff are practical and proportionate in supporting young people's behaviour and relationships. Very few formal measures of control are used, with minimal use of physical intervention. Staff prefer to prevent or deflect negative behaviours and promote the use of reasoning and negotiating skills. Young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviours as a way of learning how to improve their relationships and interactions. Young people feel that staff are very fair when it comes to helping them with their behaviour.

Staff know and understand when to report a safeguarding concern and are clear when they would take appropriate action to keep young people safe. The home is comfortable and well maintained with good health and safety standards being met. Fire drills and practice evacuations occur regularly to promote fire safety and awareness of what to do in an emergency.

Leadership and management **good**

The home is led by a competent Registered Manager. Staff are well supported and have good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff work well as a team because of effective communication and strong leadership. They demonstrate a very clear commitment to delivering high standards of childcare practice, matching their approach to the specific and diverse needs of each young person. Staff are held accountable for their performance and their individual development needs are identified through regular supervisions and discussions. This means they are able to reflect upon their performance and consider ways of enhancing and developing the

roles further for the benefit of young people. A member of staff stated: 'I asked to come back to this house because I love working here. It is nice and friendly and open. I like the layout of the house and the management of the house. Everything has a system and I function well within systems.'

The Registered Manager is appropriately qualified and has been Registered Manager of this home since July 2009. The Registered Manager and senior team have a clear understanding of the strengths of the service and areas for further progression because of regular auditing and monitoring practices. Effective use is made of reflective practice, ensuring frequent communication and consultation with young people, staff and social workers. External monitoring of the home is good. The Registered Manager provides effective responses to areas requiring development or improvement.

Young people are looked after by competent team of staff who have a wide range of professional qualifications, skills and experience that are well matched to the needs of the young people. The numbers of staff on duty are always sufficient to meet the needs of young people. Records and documentation are well maintained and provide a clear picture of each young person's time at the home.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.