

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC398385
Inspector	David Morgan
Type of inspection	Interim
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	11/07/2014

Inspection date	26/03/2015
Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection

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

This inspection finds that the good standard of overall effectiveness of the last inspection has been improved upon. The last inspection raised no requirements or recommendations. Since then a number of improvements have been made to the systems used by staff. These benefit children by showing their progress more clearly. This allows more accurate and timely adjustment to placement plans. Another improvement means there is closer attention to addressing children's educational weaknesses through extra support at home. This helps children catch-up with their peers and reach their full academic potential. Levels of attendance at schools and colleges are particularly high. As a result, children achieve good results and develop ambitions for the future.

Children enjoy a particularly well presented house. There is tasteful use of colour, wallpaper and furnishings and children contribute to their own rooms and communal areas. There is a strong system of consultation with children and one child has recently purchased pet terrapins. A large living area has been split to offer a wider choice of lounges. This is helpful when greater privacy is required. The property has an accessible attic, which is used by staff only for storage. However, access is obstructed by items on the staircase that present a tripping hazard. There are also emergency situations in which this area may be used but insufficient consideration has been given to how this will occur.

Children enjoy their home and get on well with the staff. They feel the rules are applied fairly. Difficulties between children arise from time to time but are usually of a relatively minor nature. In more serious situations the staff team liaise well with the police in particular but also other professionals. Because of this there are relatively few safeguarding issues and children rarely go missing. Staff understand and act upon the relevant protocol and are alert to new child protection issues.

Children learn to keep themselves safe and advocate independently in order to receive, for example, appropriate support from their local authorities. They enjoy a good range of activities and new opportunities are offered to them. One young person has recently started diving classes and two are going to Egypt in the next few weeks. Children become more confident and increase their social skills, which also benefits their relationships with their families.

Improvements have been made to the admission procedures. They now take closer account of the adjacent children's home. This is an important consideration when matching new children to the existing groups and helps to avoid disruptions. However, this practice and the reasons are not adequately reflected in the home's Statement of Purpose. This means that new social workers and parents are less likely to take this matter into consideration. Admissions and discharges are planned, whenever possible.

The service benefits from ambitious management. New systems are being applied, for example, that identify shortfalls in the performance of staff, which may then be taken into account in their annual appraisals. This serves to emphasise the accountability of staff and their individual role in ensuring high standards are maintained. Other monitoring systems contribute well to the same aim and plans are in place to improve the service further.

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 children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/07/2014	Full	good
23/12/2013	Full	adequate
04/11/2013	Full	inadequate
19/03/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. This is with regard to the second staircase being kept clear (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that staff preparation and training cover health and safety issues. This is with regard to the use of the attic in specific circumstances (NMS 10.7)
- ensure the children's home has a clear Statement of Purpose, which is reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance. This is with regard to it including references in relevant sections to the adjacent children's home. (NMS 13.1)

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.