

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC398391
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	Alison Patricia Tunnah / Carina McLean
Date of last inspection	03/03/2014

Inspection date	24/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
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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Young people make good personal progress in key areas of their lives. They have positive, meaningful relationships with staff who provide quality support within a nurturing atmosphere. The home is welcoming and homely however the exterior of the house and areas in the garden require maintenance.

There is highly personalised and effective care planning. As a result young people feel safe. They confirm that staff manage their safety and behaviour well. As a result risk taking behaviours reduce and opportunities for young people increase. Staff vetting procedures are in place. However, checks from a staffing agency received by the home on one staff member were not legible and therefore could not be robustly checked. This was immediately addressed on the inspection by the manager.

Young people benefit from a recently promoted new manager who is effectively using her experience and energy to lead the staff team to secure improvements and on-going practice development. The service continues to provide good quality care and achieve positive outcomes for young people. The manager's quality assurance audits are taking place but have not been sent to Ofsted. This was immediately addressed on the inspection by the manager.

Partner agencies are positive about the standard of care provided by this service and

the good progress young people have made since living at the home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a range of children's services within a private care organisation. It is registered to accommodate three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2014	Interim	good progress
04/07/2013	Full	good
29/10/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
14/06/2012	Full	good

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
26 (2001)	a person is not fit to work at a children's home unless full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. This information must be legible (Regulation 26(3) (d))	28/11/2014
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of regulation 34 paragraph 1 (Regulation 34 (2))	28/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. This specifically refers to the exterior of the house and areas in the garden (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are provided with a safe and nurturing environment where they make good progress in relation to their circumstances on arrival. As a result they become more confident and resilient individuals.

Young people are in good health. They have regular access to external health professionals as well as the company's own therapeutic team. They attend health appointments and learn to lead healthy lifestyles. As a result, they are physically active, prepare and eat nutritious meals and are actively involved in decisions about their well-being.

Young people make good personal educational progress. Their attendance and participation at school is excellent. For example, young people attend regular after school clubs and one young person has recently achieved a GCSE qualification. Young people know staff have high expectations of them and state that their 'education is promoted at all times'. One young person said: 'Staff talk to my teachers and know where I need to do more work and where I am doing well'. Young people's success is celebrated, areas for improvement are identified and young people are supported within the home to develop. As a result educational outcomes continue to improve.

Young people discuss their views, wishes and opinions in regular house meetings. A range of appropriate matters are discussed. Sometimes topics relate to young people developing their social skills and coping with communal living. These meetings are also used to consult with young people on the development of the home and service. Ideas and suggestions form the young people's own development plan. This helps them have a sense of ownership of their home and environment.

Young people benefit from formal and informal opportunities to develop age appropriate life skills and knowledge. This supports and encourages greater independence and responsibility. Such skills include time management, self-care, seeking employment and preparing meals. Continuous education and practical help from staff has helped build young people's confidence and effectively support their personal development. For example, young people have successfully learnt to use unsupervised time out in the local community. The staff team have also recently organised a car boot challenge for charity. One young person took the role of manager while the other two were staff. The challenge developed young people's skills in managing money, leading teams, delegating responsibilities and involvement in the local community.

Quality of care **good**

Young people are able to make progress in many areas of their lives because the quality of care they receive is high. They form attachments with their carers that become influential. As a result young people experience positive social interactions and develop age appropriate skills.

The staff team successfully introduce young people to, and promote their involvement in, new hobbies and interests such as holidays, car boot sales and fishing. They also support them to become active members of clubs and groups in the local community, for example, cadets, football clubs and after school clubs. These constructive activities help young people stay away from high risk activities and result in them interacting positively within the local community.

The staff team know the young people well and ensure their identified needs are met at all times. They work in line with the placing authorities care plans. They effectively promote and address aims and objectives with young people through daily activities and tasks, key worker sessions, group meetings and partnership work with other agencies. As a result, young people develop confidence and learn to communicate their needs more effectively.

The staff team provide stable and caring routines. They engage young people in understanding and influencing their future goals. They promote positive contact with family and friends. They work with therapists to help young people understand their backgrounds, the impact they can have on others and how to affect positive outcomes in their own lives. Young people's progress and achievements are celebrated by staff in discussions and by certificates and photos displayed around the home.

The house is decorated and maintained to a good standard. The Registered Manager and staff team work hard to ensure there is a home-from-home atmosphere that reflects the interests of the young people living there. However, the exterior of the house and areas in the garden require maintenance and attention. The home's development plan highlights the actions the manager has in place to complete this work. The young people's bedrooms reflect their interests and they are involved in choosing furnishing and decoration.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel safe and are protected from harm. This is because staff are knowledgeable and clear about their roles and responsibilities. They encourage young people to improve their awareness and understanding about how to keep themselves safe. They ensure young people live in a safe environment. They also ensure young people have regular access to a variety of adults with whom they can raise concerns promptly.

Staff promote appropriate behaviour and discuss inappropriate behaviour and

strategies for reducing it on a day-to-day basis and in key worker sessions. Consequences and restraint are rarely used in the home. Where it does occur, it is appropriately applied for the purposes of protecting young people from harm. All required details are recorded and young people are supported in discussing their views. Young people are encouraged to reflect and understand the impact that their behaviour has on others. This results in young people taking responsibility for their actions and also acting as good role models to others. A social worker stated: 'The young person is kept safe, risk assessments are in place and staff balance his need to be independent with his vulnerability and promote his independence as much as possible. He is learning about personal space and appropriate behaviour as a young person moving into adulthood.'

Staff understand and apply safeguarding procedures effectively in partnership with external agencies including the police. Staff receive regular safeguarding and behaviour management training that ensure that their competence is maintained. They act appropriately as corporate parents and ensure strategies used with young people are age appropriate.

Complaints from young people are appropriately managed and resolved amicably. A clear complaints policy is freely available in the home. As a result, young people know that they are able to raise their concerns and that these are acted upon.

There are robust staff vetting procedures that are managed centrally by the organisation. Any use of agency staff, which is minimal, is managed by the home. This includes a system for checking key documents prior to an agency member of staff starting work in the home. This system has recently been reviewed and updated by the organisation. Systems on the recruitment of agency staff need to be more robustly managed to ensure unsuitable people are not working with the young people. In one case prior to the review, the checks sent through by the agency were of a very poor quality and therefore very difficult to verify. The agency member of staff was used for one shift. On the day of the inspection the home's manager contacted the agency for legible copies.

Leadership and management

good

The current home's manager started in post in April this year and is in the process of applying to be registered with Ofsted.

The home's Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the practice and ethos of this service. It provides a good account of how young people will be cared for in the home and the expectations of staff to meet young people's needs. A guide booklet on the home is also provided to young people.

Staff are professional and skilled to meet the needs of young people. For example, there is a thorough induction programme which ensures that new staff complete all

compulsory professional training. Staff have reflected on how this could be improved to include time spent at the organisation's school. The new manager has responded positively to this feedback recognising the potential for improved outcomes for young people from the staff's better understanding of the school.

Staff are supported to continually review and develop their skills and practice. They attend a range of mandatory and additional training. They meet regularly both informally and formally and with regular input from the therapy team. They also receive good quality supervision. As a result they are kept up to date with practice developments and young people's progress which means they are able to recognise and meet the needs of the young people in their care.

A key strength of the manager and staff team is the partnership work they deliver with placing authorities and other agencies. Social workers stated: 'communication is excellent. There is regular contact which is appropriate, timely and thorough.' 'All staff are friendly and knowledgeable.' 'They attend all meetings and present detailed reports.'

The quality of care and practice in the home continues to be reviewed and developed. The home is regularly monitored by an independent visitor and there is evidence that the manager has responded to issues raised within their report. The manager has closely monitored outcomes and progress to improve the quality of care for young people. However, the process of ensuring that Ofsted has received these reports has been misunderstood and they were not received; this was rectified immediately by the manager during the inspection.

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.