

Young Options College

Lamledge Lane, Shifnal, TF11 8SD

Inspection dates

18–20 June 2014

Overall effectiveness

Good

2

Achievement of pupils

Good

2

Quality of teaching

Good

2

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

2

Leadership and management

Good

2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Students make good progress in English, mathematics and other subjects because they are taught well.
- A wide range of vocational subjects equips students with relevant work-related skills.
- All Year 11 and sixth form students gain a place at college when they leave school.
- Optional subjects are tailored to support students with their interests and so accelerate their learning.
- The sixth form provision is good.
- Health professionals help students with their emotional difficulties; most respond well. Gaining in confidence, their behaviour improves. Students know how to keep safe.
- All leaders, including the proprietors, are meticulous in checking the quality of teaching and take decisive action to improve it so as to quicken students' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students are not always clear about what they are expected to do when put in small groups to work on a task or when they are asked to complete a piece of work alone.
- Sometimes students flounder with their writing because they are not provided with suitable examples to help them.
- Some students do not attend school as often as they ought. This slows their progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was given a day's notice of inspection.
- Five lessons were observed. Three of these observations were undertaken jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. A detailed scrutiny of students' work was carried out in partnership with the senior leadership team.
- The arrival of the students by taxi and buses was observed in the mornings and the inspector attended a morning briefing for all staff. The inspector toured the building and observed outside play areas at break time.
- Meetings took place with the head of Young Options Group Complex Needs Service, the school's external consultant for school improvement, members of the senior leadership team, other staff members and students.
- Eighteen Ofsted questionnaires completed by staff were examined.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire Parent View for an analysis to be made. However, the inspector read the school's analysis of its most recent data capture about parental and carer satisfaction with the school.
- A range of policies and documents were examined, including those related to students' progress, behaviour and attendance. All safeguarding policies were scrutinised. Statements of special educational needs and students' behaviour risk assessments were examined.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Young Options College is a small independent purpose-built day school that is registered to provide comprehensive care and education for up to 50 students who may be looked after and who have complex and severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Almost all students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. About 10% of students have an autism spectrum disorder and a further 10% have moderate learning difficulties.
- Students are admitted from a large number of local authorities across the United Kingdom.
- Sixty percent of students live in residential provision within the wider Young Options Organisation. This did not form part of this inspection. A separate report of the inspection of the residential provision is published by the social care inspectorate.
- Most students are in Key Stages 3 and 4, but the primary department and the sixth form are growing in numbers. There are significantly more boys than girls on roll.
- Students often join the school other than at the usual times, including mid-way through Years 10 or 11.
- Most students are White British. None of the students from minority ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school receives additional funding for very few students eligible for pupil premium funding (this is funding specifically for students eligible for free school meals and those looked after by their local authority) because most local authorities state that this is passed on as part of the fee for a purchased place.
- The school makes use of alternative provision. The main providers of vocational courses, such as BTEC Level 3 in animal management and care and AS courses such as politics, are Walford College and Telford College of Arts and Technology.
- The last full inspection of the school was in December 2011 when it was found to be outstanding. There was an emergency inspection visit in February 2014. The emergency report that came from this inspection asked the school to keep a clear record of sanctions imposed and to modify the admissions register so that all of the required information was held in one place.
- The headteacher came into post in January 2014 and the deputy headteacher came into post in April 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in all subjects by ensuring that:
 - students are clear about what they are expected to do when the teacher gives them individual assignments or places them in small groups to work on a specific task in lessons
 - when teachers give students instructions to write specific types of sentences or in a particular style, they provide students with examples to help them.
- Improve attendance by 4% by July 2015 by:
 - establishing the reasons why those students who do not attend regularly do not want to come to school through one-to-one discussions with them
 - working with these students, their parents or carers and allocated support workers to draw up and implement plans to help them improve their attendance.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- Attainment on entry is different for each student. Typically, it is below average in English and mathematics. This is because most students have gaps in their learning associated with their disaffection with education and often weak attendance in their previous schools.
- Students in Key Stages 2 and 3 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 9, many students make more than the expected progress in English and mathematics from their starting points. From the time they enter school until when they move into Year 10, their rate of progress is often faster than what is typical for students over such periods of time.
- Key Stage 4 students make good progress in English, mathematics and a range of other GCSE subjects. Grades vary, as do the starting points of students, but reflect good achievement. The most-able students achieve GCSE passes at grade C in mathematics and grade B in other subjects, such as art and physical education. Typically, grades at English GCSE are a little lower but nonetheless demonstrate good achievement. Overall, attainment by Year 11 is below the national average because the catch-up from when these students entered the school is so great.
- Year 11 students achieve BTEC Level 1 and 2 qualifications in a wide range of vocational subjects. All who leave school at the end of Year 11 secure a place at college to develop their work-related skills further.
- Sixth form students achieve well. They acquire employability, literacy and numeracy skills alongside a wide range of vocational qualifications. A few succeed at AS and A2 level in art. All successfully make the transition to college.
- Most students who follow BTEC Level 3 and City and Guilds courses, such as animal management and care delivered by off-site alternative providers, achieve well.
- There is no discernible difference in the rate of progress between boys and girls, different minority ethnic groups and students with autism spectrum disorder.
- A few students with very complex emotional, behavioural and mental health needs do not attend school as often as they ought. This slows their progress and they do not do as well as those who attend regularly.
- Pupil premium funding is targeted in a range of innovative ways that benefit students. These students make the same good progress as their peers who do not receive this funding.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Typically, teaching is good throughout the school, including in English and mathematics. Teaching in the sixth form is challenging and relevant.
- Teachers have good relationships with students. Students are confident to ask their teachers questions. Teachers use their subject knowledge effectively in answering students' questions and so deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- A wide range of resources are used to provide interesting activities to develop students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. For example, in the motor vehicle workshop students solved a problem while working on a car, just as they would be required to do if working in a commercial garage.
- Students with autism spectrum disorder are skilfully kept away from noise and objects that easily distract their learning. Consequently, they engage with learning as enthusiastically as other students. A wide range of approaches are used to stretch the most-able students.
- A range of effective personalised strategies are used in teaching students to read and in encouraging them to write.

- Teachers are flexible and good at thinking on the spot. They have the courage to change their approach so as to ensure that students make good progress, as seen in a Key Stage 3 mathematics lesson.
- Students are assessed carefully at whatever point they enter the school to find out what they know and can do. This enables teachers to provide work at the correct level for all students. Consequently, those who struggle are given extra support while all are challenged to move forward with new learning. These factors contribute to students' good enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, learning.
- Marking is thorough and detailed. Students are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work and then are followed up to check that they make the required improvements.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to students' learning. They are skilled at spotting the signs when students become distressed while working on a task and intervene quickly to support students on these occasions.
- Occasionally, students are not sufficiently clear about what they are expected to do when teachers move from whole class teaching and set them off to work alone or in small groups. This slows their learning.
- Sometimes students are unsure about how to start a particular piece of writing when asked to do so without being given a good example of the genre of writing they are expected to produce.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- The behaviour of students is good. Most students arrive at this school with difficulties in managing their behaviour. Often they have not engaged productively with learning for a long time. Most students are supported effectively in working through their negative feelings about school and so engage positively with learning. Mostly they behave well in lessons.
- Students respect the school's buildings and grounds. There is no graffiti, displays are looked after, and only on rare occasions does a student 'blow' and cause damage. Such rare instances are dealt with swiftly and effectively. At lunch and break time older students mix and chat with one another and staff as if one big family, while younger students play outside on climbing equipment without arguing.
- Students are clear that there will be sanctions if they misbehave and are proud when they are awarded merits for good behaviour. Behaviour is mostly managed skilfully but a little inconsistency remains.
- Pupils say that there is no cyber bullying and that racist incidents are rare. The school's incident logs confirm what they say. Incidents of other types of prejudiced bullying are falling rapidly. Students are confident that there is an adult they can go to if they need support or want to report a concern, but a few are reluctant to do so. Senior leaders recognize the need to do further work to encourage all students to approach an adult within the school about anything whatsoever that troubles them.
- Attendance is not as good as it could be because a few students do not attend as regularly as they should.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through religious education and a link with a school nearby, where there are a significant number of minority ethnic students on roll, students' awareness of cultural diversity is raised. Students learn about civil and criminal law and enjoy engaging in a simulated mock court activity as part of their citizenship programme.
- Older students support younger students in their physical education lessons. They initiate fund-raising activities in the local community and participate in music events for residents living in the nearby town.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Risk assessments of the safety of the building are thorough. Since the emergency inspection visit, the number of students

failing to adhere to school rules has fallen rapidly because they understand the consequences of doing so. High-risk students have robust management plans that are reviewed regularly.

- Younger students say that they feel safe because they have their own part of the building and that older students are increasingly taking responsibility to look out and care for them.
- The school has all of the required welfare, health and safety policies. Their content is clear and they are implemented effectively. Safeguarding procedures are robust. There is a well-maintained single central register, together with safe recruitment procedures. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and all training is up-to-date.
- There are a suitable number of teachers trained in first aid. Risk assessments of visits and the outdoor learning environment are thorough.
- Students know how to keep safe when using a computer, while in a work-place environment, and when participating in outdoor pursuits. They understand the dangers associated with substance misuse and the potential health risks of unsafe sex.

Leadership and management

Good

- There have been significant improvements since the emergency inspection. The admission register now meets the required regulation and sanctions are logged clearly and accurately. Sanctions are also positive. For example, detentions are used by senior leaders to explore what went wrong for a student and why it went wrong. These consultations result in modified behaviour plans to support students in improving their behaviour in the future.
- The proprietors, senior and middle leaders ensure that teaching and learning are good. As a result, students achieve well and their personal development is good.
- Leaders know what works well and what is in need of improvement. Decisive actions result in improvements, but more work is required to raise attendance.
- The heads of the primary and secondary departments ceaselessly drive improvements. The sixth form is managed effectively. A rich and relevant curriculum is in place and planning to implement required changes for September 2014 is outstanding. A flexible and innovative curriculum motivates students to learn and enables them to achieve well.
- The effective management of the team of psychologists, therapists and social workers based on the school site enables them to support students in overcoming the emotional difficulties that would otherwise be a barrier to their learning.
- There is daily communication with students' residences. Staff know at the start of each day if a student has had a bad night that may impact adversely when she or he arrives at school.
- The management of the provision for students with autism spectrum disorder is good. The younger such students have picture schedules to help them cope with the structure of the school day. Aspects of the curriculum are adapted so that these students improve their communication skills and their behaviour.
- The buildings and extensive grounds are well maintained. The specialist vocational areas are spacious and well equipped. The horticultural area with its greenhouse supports students in working in teams to maintain the flower beds and the vegetable plot.
- The management team and tutors work closely with parents, carers and staff from the children's homes. All the required information is provided for parents and carers. Annual reports to parents and carers are detailed and helpful. These, along with the complaints policy, meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate
<p>Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the <i>Non-association independent school inspection handbook</i> which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.</p>	

School details

Unique reference number	133478
Inspection number	444600
DfE registration number	893/6025

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Primary and Secondary
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Young Options Group
Headteacher	Julia Saint
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 December 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£83,428
Telephone number	01952 468220
Fax number	01952 468221
Email address	julia.saint@youngoptions.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014



