

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	24/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC361167
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered person	New Options (3) Ltd.
Registered person address	Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5JG

Responsible individual	Graham Baker
Registered manager	Rachael Sharpe
Inspector	Michelle Spruce

Inspection date	24/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC361167

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff have the ability to pre-empt situations before they escalate. This helps to keep young people safe.
- The manager responds quickly and efficiently to complaints and works effectively with local safeguarding children team.
- Staff understand children's previous experiences and current emotions. They are skilled to interpret communication and behaviour.
- Young people's behaviour plans and risk assessments are clear and precise. Staff are clear about the individual needs of young people.
- Effective multi-disciplinary team working provides young people with clear and robust care plans.
- Relationships between staff and young people are open and honest. Staff understand them and know them well.
- There are areas identified for improvement: these relate to behaviour management, privacy and access, and the review of the quality of care.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes details of the child's behaviour leading to the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(ii))	31/08/2015
The registered person must ensure that any limitation placed on child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises- is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21(c)(ii)(iii)(iv))	31/08/2015

Recommendations

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

- Undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- Ensure the review enables the registered person to identify areas of strengths and weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65, paragraph 15.4)
- Have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This setting is an independent residential special school registered as a children's home, operated by a private company. The school offers specialised education and care for up to 22 children with learning disabilities, including six children under short-break arrangements. The school has a specialism with children who are diagnosed with an autistic spectrum disorder and associated complex needs. Some young people stay until they have completed their education at 19.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/07/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
12/02/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress
04/12/2013	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
<p>Young people have good experiences and make good progress in the home. This is confirmed in a survey response that says: 'the young person has made excellent progress at the school and within the actual care home, which gives credit in its own right to the staff and management team'.</p> <p>Young people benefit from personalised plans and risk assessments devised by the clinical team, in conjunction with education and care staff. There is a strong emphasis on working together. This multi-team approach addresses all the needs of the young people and provides clear actions for their development. Educational achievements of young people are consistently positive and recognised.</p> <p>Relationships between staff and young people are strong. Staff provide excellent support based on their training, skills and knowledge. As a result, young people thrive in a nurturing and caring environment. The staff work closely with other services to share best practice. This multi-agency approach improves young people's development and progress. A health professional said: 'we make a remarkable difference to the lives of young people because the setting is providing a rounded package'. Another said: 'the joined up work between the occupational health and sensory work is essential to the development of young people; this helps them progress'.</p> <p>Staff and health professionals actively promote young people's well-being. For example, the school nurse works with staff to look into the effects of food and drink on young people. This helps to plan healthier menus. A health professional said: 'our role is to deliver training to staff to improve consistent practice'. This holistic approach promotes healthy lifestyles and maintains continuity.</p> <p>Young people have a range of communication styles to raise their views and opinions. Staff know and understand the range of methods used and interpret sounds, facial expression and signs well. Their wishes and feelings are understood and their privacy protected. For example, a young person signalled to staff while playing in the garden that she would like more privacy and space. She gently pushed them away. The staff understood and respected her request and placed more space between them. Access to a specialist advocacy service further promotes their welfare and well-being.</p> <p>Young people living away from home settle well. Joint working between managers and the clinical team is excellent. They consider the impact of young people already living in the home when planning new placements. Staff and managers</p>	

work with families to make the transition into the home as easy as possible. Staff adjust visiting times to support relationships between young people and their families. This strengthens bonds. A parent responded to a survey and said: 'my son has settled well; his speech and understanding is coming on so well; he eats well and is learning to cook, it gives him more independence'.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
<p>Young people are safe and protected. Staff are trained and skilled to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and have clear channels for reporting. They are confident in whistleblowing and do not hesitate to raise concerns. This keeps young people safe from harm.</p> <p>Young people do not go missing from home. However, the manager continues to share the missing from home protocol with the police. During the inspection, the police were onsite to sign it off. Staff supervise young people well. Staffing levels are dependent on individual needs and risk assessment. A comment in a survey about the home confirms young people are safe. It said, 'young people are provided with a safe place to live'.</p> <p>Staff and young people know how to make a complaint and they do so. The manager responds quickly and efficiently to investigate and provide an outcome where possible. She works closely with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and refers to them when necessary. For example, the manager investigated a recent complaint and provided a response within 24 hours. The manager was particularly sensitive to the impact to both the person making the complaint and the staff under investigation. This quick response reduced anxieties and enabled the home to function as normal. The manager provided excellent support to all parties throughout the process.</p> <p>Young people benefit from robust behaviour management plans and risk assessments. Staff work hard to develop strategies for young people to manage their behaviour better. A staff member said: 'we use re-direction to help manage his behaviour, he show you the thumbs up when he is ok; we have better controlled meal times, this has reduced incidents'. Staff are trained to use physical intervention. However, they do not use restraint consistently in accordance with the legislative framework. Records of restraint are not detailed enough to explain the use of the measure. This places young people at risk of unnecessary restraint.</p> <p>Staff know what triggers behaviour. They pre-empt situations before they happen.</p>	

This helps them to remove young people safely and sensitively before behaviour escalates. This protects young people from injury or harm.

Young people rely on staff to unlock some doors and gates in and around the home. Although this keeps young people safe, it does not provide a homely feel and removes the independence of those who wish to freely access areas that are safe.

Young people take part in routine fire drills. This ensures they know how to react in the event of a fire evacuation. Health and safety monitoring is undertaken regularly. This keeps the home free from hazards.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
<p>The Registered Manager has been in post since November 2013. She has a level 4 qualification in working with children and in management. She is an experienced manager of services for children and adults with disabilities and autism.</p> <p>The manager works hard to retain and safely recruit staff to enhance an already committed and skilled workforce. Current vacancies are covered by agency staff, some of who have been offered permanent positions. All staff receive regular supervision and appraisals. This helps to identify areas for development and training. However, the manager does not receive regular supervision. Records of her supervision are not up-to-date and were not easy to track. Electronic records fail to provide evidence to demonstrate the supervision has taken place and paper trail evidence was not available. This means opportunities to discuss development and progress for the manager on a regular basis is lost.</p> <p>Staff training is good. A multi-team approach invests in providing good quality training to meet young people's individual needs. A staff member said: 'training is becoming more tailored to the needs of young people; my supervision is of good quality and supports me to reflect on practice.'</p> <p>The manager has increased the short break placements from two to six. This has expanded the services they offer and provides more opportunities for children and young people to have a short break experience. A parent said: 'the staff are excellent; they play so well with him; he has opportunities to do so much more than I can do with him.'</p>	

An independent visitor monitors the home monthly. The manager knows how well the service is doing from feedback received in monitoring reports and quality assurance visits from local authorities. The manager monitors the home and provides a review of care in line with regulation to Ofsted. However, the monitoring does not always give an evaluation of patterns and trends in regards to the use of physical intervention, locked gates, and doors.

Staff feel supported by their manager and leaders. They know the manager will act on, and take concerns and complaints seriously. The confidence they have in the manager ensures staff raise concerns knowing there will be a fair and equal investigation. This protects staff against discrimination and bullying.

Relationships with external partners are good. The manager strives to work in partnership with other professionals and builds positive links. The manager challenges where necessary, for example, where plans are out of date or missing. This helps to gain records without significant delay.

There is a good understanding of the ethos of the service. The manager updates the Statement of Purpose and shares the aims and objectives with, staff parents and stakeholders. The team deliver good care with passion and determination. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the service and continually assess them in the development plan.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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