

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	09/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC361167
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Options Autism (5) Limited
Registered provider address	Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual	Graham Norris
Registered manager	Rachael Sharpe
Inspector	Jo Stephenson

Inspection date	09/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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	Outstanding

SC361167

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people receive personalised and bespoke care that reflects their individual needs. This means that they make progress in all aspects of their development.
- Young people are safe in the home because risk assessments are robust, detailed and regularly reviewed.
- Staff work in partnership with a range of health professionals and education staff. This multidisciplinary working practice ensures that young people have suitable access to the additional support services they need.
- The registered manager effectively monitors the home and associated services. The focus of the home is on meeting young people's individual needs and evaluating their progress.
- Staff work with young people's families to support and maintain regular contact visits. This means that young people are not isolated from those who are important to them.
- Young people have good relationships with staff. These enhance their feelings of safety and security, and enable them to make good progress in the home.
- An area for improvement is to ensure that staff complete all records pertaining to the use of measures of control, including all forms of physical restraint, in sufficient detail.

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 within 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 use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii))	30/09/2016

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 service offers specialised education and care for up to 22 children and young people with learning disabilities, including three under short break arrangements. The school has a specialism with children and young people 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
21/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/06/2015	Full (aligned)	Good
10/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/07/2014	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 make good progress in all aspects of their development. This is because they receive personalised care and support. Internal care plans, support plans, health plans and risk assessments reflect young people's individual needs. Young people have exceptionally complex needs and display extremely challenging behaviours. Their vulnerabilities are multifaceted. Managers and staff work in partnership with specialist professionals and other external agencies to devise bespoke support packages. This means that young people are able to enjoy a positive day-to-day experience when living in the home.</p> <p>Staff ensure that internal care plans mirror the aims and objectives of the local authorities. Statutory care plans, minutes of 'looked after child' review meetings and other associated records are retained in young people's case files. This ensures that young people receive comprehensive and integrated care and support.</p> <p>Relationships between young people and staff are positive. Staff engage with each young person to a level appropriate to their individual tolerance and stimulation limits reflective of any diagnosed autism spectrum disorder. Staff have an excellent understanding of these limits. For example, they recognise the specific signs that indicate overstimulation and a possible increase in a young person's levels of anxiety. This means that staff interventions are timely and appropriate, and support young people to regulate their behaviours.</p> <p>Staff have extensive verbal and non-verbal communication skills and refine these to reflect the individual communication preferences and abilities of each young person. Young people are encouraged to express their wishes and feelings, and staff support them to make everyday choices and decisions. Staff advocate for young people and ensure that they have access to independent advocacy services. This ensures that young people can access the complaints procedures and that these processes are transparent.</p> <p>The home is a specialist residential special school registered as a children's home. Young people make positive and sustainable progress in education. This is because they benefit from bespoke education plans that identify their learning needs and abilities, and set bespoke targets for achievement. These combine academic skills with social skills, emotional skills and learning activities such as educational excursions. This holistic approach to learning means that young people experience educational success.</p>	

Young people's physical, emotional and psychological health is well supported and promoted. The multidisciplinary health team includes clinical psychologists, speech and language specialists, occupational therapy services, nursing services and paediatric input. Partnership working between these professionals is extremely effective. This means that young people receive tailored healthcare that reflects their complex medical and emotional health needs. Young people make good progress because of these partnership arrangements.

Staff work with young people and their families to facilitate regular contact visits. This is a considerable strength of the home. Young people receive practical and emotional support to help them maintain and progress relationships with their families. This means that young people are not isolated.

Transition arrangements are effective. Managers introduce young people to the service and to the school at a pace that manages their emotions and takes account of the impact of new admissions on other young people. Similarly, when young people are ready to leave the home, staff work with their families, placing authorities and new placements to ensure that young people receive the support they need. This meticulous planning increases the success of these placements.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people are safe because risk assessments are detailed and effective. Managers, care staff and the multidisciplinary health team work together to ensure that these documents reflect young people's individual vulnerabilities. Risk assessments specify intervention strategies to support young people and to manage their complex behaviours. The registered manager regularly reviews these records and takes account of any identified patterns or trends. Risk assessments are 'live' documents that are continually updated and modified. This ensures that young people receive the support they need to keep them safe.</p> <p>Staff have an exceptional knowledge of young people and their complex behaviours. This enables them to respond appropriately to incidents of challenging behaviours that may place young people and others at risk of harm. Staff receive regular training in the use of physical restraint. They frequently use this measure of control to keep young people safe and to reduce the potential for incidents of challenging behaviours to escalate. However, when the use of any form of restraint is required, records of these incidents lack sufficient detail. For example, when young people pose a significant risk to their peers and are unable to remain in communal areas without continual physical restraint, staff remove young people to other areas of the home. On these occasions, staff do not consistently or</p>	

sufficiently record the reasons why young people cannot be with their peers, actions taken to re-integrate them into the group or the effectiveness of this measure of control. This means that the registered manager is unable to review these events fully.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing from the home, and young people are not at risk of sexual exploitation, although individual risk assessments highlight the potential risks. Young people remain reliant on staff in order to access various areas of the home, the surrounding grounds and outside areas. Since the last inspection, the registered manager, in partnership with the health team, young people's families and placing authorities, has taken robust action to assess each young person's capacity to make appropriate decisions about their own safety. For example, some young people are able to have keys and electronic fobs that allow them to have free access around the home and to their bedrooms. The registered manager continually reviews these capacity assessments and this area of work remains in progress. This means that any limitations on young people's access are necessary and proportionate, and allow young people as much freedom as possible taking account of the need to protect them from harm.

Staff receive regular training around safeguarding and child protection issues, and their knowledge and understanding of these areas of practice are appropriate. The registered manager addresses allegations of abuse or harm exceptionally well, in partnership with external safeguarding agencies and the designated officer for the local authority. This promotes young people's well-being, welfare and safety.

Medication administration systems are safe and robust. Staff complete medication administration training, and are supported by nursing services on site in the home. Managers undertake regular medication audits, and staff check administration records each day. These significantly reduce the potential for medication errors to occur.

Staff undertake regular health and safety checks and a detailed fire risk assessment is in place. Young people participate in fire drills and practices to ensure that they are aware of how to exit the home safely in the event of a fire. The location risk assessment highlights some of the local considerations that potentially affect young people's safety.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager is an experienced childcare practitioner. She holds suitable level qualifications in residential childcare, and leadership and management, and successfully registered with Ofsted in November 2013. She has an exceptional	

knowledge and understanding of managing a service for children and young people with learning disabilities and autism. Ofsted raised one recommendation at the last inspection. This was to ensure that the registered manager captured the strengths and weakness of the service in the quality of care review. The registered manager has successfully addressed this recommendation.

Young people make good progress in all aspects of their personal growth and individual development. This is because the registered manager prioritises their needs. She ensures that young people are the focus of day-to-day routines in the home and young people respond well to this structure. The registered manager retains a close overview of the progress that young people make, and evaluates this progress in line with the aims and objectives of the placing authorities. This means that young people benefit from comprehensive and integrated care and support. This enhances their progress and ensures that their experience of living in the home is immensely positive.

Relationships with other services are exceptionally strong. This is because the registered manager recognises the importance of partnership working with other agencies and external professionals. This ethos is central to the practice in the home, and means that the service meets the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose. When the practice of other professionals falls short of acceptable standards, the registered manager challenges these agencies to ensure that young people have access to the help and support they need. This collaborative approach ensures that young people make progress in all aspects of their lives. Feedback from social workers, other professionals and young people's families is very positive, and they commend the registered manager's commitment and dedication.

Staff receive regular and good-quality supervision. These sessions appraise their performance, encourage them to reflect on their practice, and highlight how their actions and inactions may influence young people's development. Staff participate in bespoke training sessions that reflect young people's needs. The registered manager ensures that these training programmes equip staff with the skills and knowledge they need to support young people effectively.

Since the last inspection, a number of new staff have commenced employment at the home. Recruitment procedures are robust and enable the registered manager to scrutinise the suitability of staff to work with vulnerable young people. This promotes young people's safety. The registered manager closely monitors staff induction programmes to ensure that these equip staff with the skills that they need to work with young people. After the successful completion of a probation period, eligible staff who have yet to gain suitable qualifications enrol on relevant level social care courses relating to residential care for children and young people. This means that young people work with staff who have the skills and experience necessary to support their development.

The registered manager monitors the service effectively. This is a considerable

strength of the home and means that young people make measurable and sustainable progress that enhances their development. The registered manager ensures that bespoke monitoring systems reflect the service. These identify young people's individual targets and achievements, and take account of the aims and objectives of external agencies and the placing authorities. The registered manager is meticulous in her approach to monitoring the service. She continually considers the impact that the quality of care provided has on young people's progress. She clearly and consistently identifies patterns and trends that influence young people's behaviours, and evaluates these against young people's progress. This means that the service is responsive to young people's needs and that practice constantly promotes young people's welfare and well-being.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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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