

# Options College Shifnal

6 September 2016

Lamlledge Lane, Shifnal TF11 8SD

## Overall outcome

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- At the emergency inspection in February 2016, these three standards were not met because arrangements made to safeguard pupils did not pay due regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. In particular, the proprietor had not updated the school's safeguarding policy to reflect the latest government requirements. This meant that aspects of the school's safeguarding practice were not supported by clear policy statements or up-to-date national guidance.
- The school's action plan stated that an updated safeguarding policy, taking into account current government requirements, would be ratified by the governors and published on the school's website by 23 March 2016. Parents would be informed of its location.
- The proprietor and senior leaders' actions to meet the previously un-met standards have been effective. The school now meets requirements in each previously un-met paragraph. All part 3 previously un-met standards are now met.
- The headteacher and governors give high priority to keeping pupils safe from harm. They took effective action to improve safeguarding procedures quickly. A new safeguarding policy was produced in February 2016, ahead of schedule. It was comprehensive and its contents paid due regard to current government requirements. The policy was updated again in early September 2016, to take account of revisions made to the 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016) guidance. The current safeguarding policy is located on the school's website.
- All staff, and others who come into regular contact with pupils, have been suitably trained in the school's child protection procedures. Safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively to keep pupils safe from harm.
- The school appropriately fulfils its 'Prevent' duties. The school has suitably assessed the general level of risk of pupils being subject to radicalisation or drawn into terrorism or extremist activity. Appropriate procedures are in place for reporting missing children and incidents of female genital mutilation.
- The designated person responsible for child protection liaises very well with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. A robust and clear referral system is in place and when incidents occur they are dealt with in line with school protocols.
- The proprietor has ensured that all of the required recruitment and staff vetting checks have been carried out on all staff, and others who work in school, to confirm their suitability to work with children. The single central register contains all of the information that it should.
- All staff are trained in physical restraint techniques to prevent pupils harming themselves and others. Satisfactory procedures are adopted to record incidents.

- Since July 2015, eight incidents involving physical intervention by staff have been reported to Shropshire's Safeguarding Children Board. All referrals have been dealt with effectively, either internally or by local authority safeguarding officers. Where school procedures have not been followed correctly, further training or warning notices have been issued to bring about further improvement in the use of restraint methods.
- Behaviour and anti-bullying procedures are suitably implemented. Pupils say that they are free from harassment and intimidation. They report that bullying is dealt with effectively when it occurs.
- High priority is given to ensuring that pupils are kept safe when using the internet. A new filtering and monitoring system is in use to prevent pupils from gaining access to inappropriate material when online.
- The school's absconding policy is clear. Some individuals do leave the site from time to time. When this occurs, school procedures are appropriately followed, ensuring pupils return to school safely.
- Robust risk assessments are carried out for the premises, activities outside school, and for individuals, in order to keep them safe.
- The high adult to pupil ratio means that pupils are well supervised at all times.
- The premises and accommodation are safe and secure.
- These three standards are now met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- In February 2016, these four standards were not met because the proprietor and senior leaders were not demonstrating good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that all independent school standards were met consistently. They were not properly safeguarding pupils or promoting their well-being effectively.
- The action plan produced following the emergency inspection made explicit the activities, the timescale for completion, and the personnel, resources and success criteria to address regulatory failings. It was judged an acceptable plan by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in June 2016.
- The proprietor and senior leaders took urgent action to meet the previously un-met standards. The school now meets requirements in each previously un-met paragraph. All previously un-met part 8 standards are now met.
- Complaints are appropriately handled in line with the school's procedures.
- The clear strategic plan led to rapid improvement. It ensured that there was better oversight of safeguarding arrangements with regular reviews of compliance matters by the governance and scrutiny board. Minutes of governor meetings indicate that compliance issues are on the agenda for every meeting. The safeguarding policy is now reviewed annually and a named governor ensures that the procedure is up-to-date and in line with national guidance. The current safeguarding policy is comprehensive and it is suitably implemented. Parents have been told that it is available on the school's website. Appropriate training has been provided so that all staff can fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.
- These four standards are now met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### **The school now meets the following independent school standards**

- 7, 7(a) and 7(b)
- 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

## School details

Unique reference number	133478
DfE registration number	893/6025
Inspection number	10021763

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Options Group
Chair	Graham Baker
Headteacher	Julia Saint
Annual fees (day pupils)	£87,000
Telephone number	01952 468220
Email address	Julia.saint@optionsbesd.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	2 July 2015

## Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection of the school was in July 2015. An unannounced emergency inspection was conducted in February 2016. The Department for Education (DfE) requested the emergency inspection to check the school's continued compliance with the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (part 2) and pupils' welfare, health and safety (part 3) independent school standards. Both inspections resulted in a published report.
- The school changed its name from Young Options College to Options College Shifnal in August 2015. It is owned by Options group, which also owns other schools in England and Wales. In April 2016, Options group merged with another provider called Hillcrest to provide education in schools.

- Options College Shifnal is a purpose-built independent day school that provides education for up to 50 pupils aged between seven and 19 years. The vast majority of pupils have complex and severe social, emotional and mental health needs, often involving challenging behaviour.
- Almost all pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. An increasing proportion of pupils have additional learning needs, such as autism, attention deficit disorders or moderate learning difficulties.
- Most pupils are White British. There are currently 42 pupils on roll. Five attend the school's sixth form and are above statutory school age. There are more boys than girls on roll.
- Pupils join the school at any point in their primary or secondary education, some as late as Year 11. Many have been excluded from schools previously or spent long periods of time not attending schools.
- The school makes use of alternative provision at Nova Training, Walford College and Telford College of Arts and Technology, as well as using local businesses or farms for work experience. No off-site unit is run by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This is the school's first progress monitoring inspection. It was conducted without notice.
- The DfE accepted the school's action plan on 27 June 2016.
- The DfE requested that the inspection checked that safeguarding and leadership and management standards are met. Two complaints and a concern raised about safeguarding arrangements were also considered as part of the inspection.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the person in charge of the single central register. The inspector met a group of pupils to explore their views about the school, particularly about behaviour, welfare, health and safety matters. The inspector undertook a tour of the school, with the headteacher, to observe learning, the quality of behaviour and to evaluate how well the school keeps pupils safe and secure.
- A range of welfare, health and safety documentation, including policies and records relating to safeguarding, was scrutinised to check compliance with the independent school standards. The robustness of the school's recruitment and staff vetting procedures was also evaluated.
- The inspector checked that the school's safeguarding policy was available on the school's website and its contents were comprehensive and in line with current government requirements.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, for these to be considered. No Ofsted point-in-time survey, to seek the views of pupils, had been conducted by the school. Pupils' views were sought through informal and formal discussion.

## Inspection team

David Rzeznik, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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