

SC361167

Registered provider: Options Autism (5) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This setting is an independent residential special school registered as a children's home. A private company operates this home. The service offers specialist education and care for up to 22 children and young people who have learning disabilities. This includes up to three children and young people under short-break arrangements. The service is a specialist provision for children and young people who have a diagnosed autistic spectrum disorder and associated complex needs. Some young people stay until they have completed their education at 19.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are safe in the home because managers and staff ensure that risk assessments reflect young people's individual needs, abilities and disabilities. These are continually reviewed and implemented.
- The registered manager works in partnership with in-house health and education specialists to provide young people with holistic and comprehensive care and support.
- Staff receive good quality, regular and practice-related formal supervision.
- Staff undertake a range of training courses. This helps them to support young people's individual needs.
- Internal care and support plans incorporate all aspects of young people's development. A multi-disciplinary team reviews these plans.
- The registered manager effectively monitors and reviews every aspect of the service to ensure that the care provided meets young people's needs.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Staff do not always ensure that they include sufficient detail of the events leading up to a physical restraint in records relating to the use of this measure of control.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/08/2016	Full	Good
21/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/06/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(ii))	31/01/2018

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make remarkable progress in all areas of their development, taking account of their individual starting points. Young people receive exceptionally personalised care and support from a knowledgeable and motivated staff team. Managers and staff tailor this care to reflect young people's very complex needs. They know and understand these needs and continually adapt their practice to provide young people with bespoke support.

Staff use the internal care planning process to identify young people's progress and highlight new targets for achievement. They use a range of verbal and non-verbal communication mediums, including visual social stories, to celebrate and praise young people's accomplishments. Staff also use their communication skills, including interpreting young people's gestures and mannerisms, to gain their views and to understand their likes and dislikes. This collaborative approach supports young people's self-esteem and confidence.

Internal care plans reflect the longer-term aims and objectives of the local authority care plan. This is because staff ensure that young people's case files include all required and relevant information and documentation. Staff work with young people, their families and their social workers to complete realistic capability assessments. They use this information to support young people's journeys into adulthood and to secure the services that young people need now and in the future. This early exit planning means that young people are fully prepared to leave the home, and do so with bespoke support packages in place.

Young people appear to have positive relationships with staff and present as relaxed and comfortable in their company. Staff use these relationships to encourage young people to try new activities. For many young people, social interactions with others, including with their peers, is frightening and anxiety provoking. Nevertheless, staff continue to try to safely expose young people to new learning opportunities and positive experiences.

This service is a residential special school registered as a children's home. The registered manager ensures that promoting the importance of education is central to the daily routines in the home. Partnership working between care staff and teaching staff is very effective. This collaboration means that young people benefit from bespoke education plans that identify their social and academic learning needs. As a result, young people experience educational success.

An integrated team is responsible for meeting young people's physical and emotional health needs. This team includes senior care staff, speech and language specialists, nursing services, occupational therapy services and psychology services. Young people make good progress in this area of their development because partnership working arrangements between health teams are effective. Furthermore, the positive impact of physical activity and healthy eating is threaded into the culture of the home.

Staff provide young people with the practical and emotional support that they need to maintain positive relationships with their families. Parents and carers say that they 'always feel very welcome' in the home and that staff encourage them to regularly visit the home. Young people use telephones, social media and internet video calling systems to communicate with their families. The development of additional visitor facilities means that families can now enjoy longer visits, if this is their preference. This approach provides a balance between supporting individual young people and considering the wider impact on all young people. As a result, young people are not isolated from their families.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people are safe in the home. This is because staff are able to differentiate between the risk-taking behaviours that young people can control and those symptomatic of their disabilities. Managers, in partnership with the health team, use this information to develop effective risk assessments and behaviour management plans. These plans encourage young people to take an appropriate level of responsibility for the behaviours that they can control. Staff use clear verbal and visual commands to de-escalate potentially harmful situations and re-direct young people to more appropriate activities. This proportionate approach to managing risks allows young people to grow and develop. The registered manager and the senior leadership team regularly review all young people's risk assessments and behaviour management plans. These documents are evolving plans that reflect young people's complex and ever-changing needs. As a result, young people's safety and welfare is promoted.

Staff know and understand young people's disabilities and the associated complex and often challenging behaviours. They use this knowledge to intervene in risky situations that may place young people or others at risk of harm. When necessary, staff use physical or mechanical restraint to manage these situations and prevent these from escalating. In these circumstances, staff complete records of these incidents. In the majority of cases, these records clearly demonstrate the need for the use of these measures of control. However, not all staff consistently detail the antecedents to behaviours that subsequently result in the use of physical restraint. This means that the registered manager cannot fully evaluate all records of restraint. The registered manager is already working with staff to improve this area of practice. This greatly reduces the negative impact of this shortfall.

There are no incidents of young people going missing from the home. However, managers and staff recognise the potential risks for young people if they leave the home without permission. For the most part, young people are reliant on staff in order to access various areas of the home, the surrounding grounds and outside areas. The registered manager, in partnership with the health team, young people's families and the placing authorities, continues to assess if this restrictive practice is a deprivation of young people's liberty. Staff use these assessments to consider young people's capacity to recognise risks to their safety and to take evasive action to prevent harm. For some young people this means that they have unsupported 'fob' access to their bedrooms as and when they chose. The registered manager retains an overview of all of these assessments and continually reviews the outcome of these. This means that agreed limitations on young people's access remains proportionate to the need to protect them from harm.

Staff undertake safeguarding and child protection training. These training programmes include child sexual exploitation and radicalisation elements relevant to young people who have complex disabilities. This ensures that staff remain vigilant to these forms of abuse. Internal safeguarding and child protection policies reflect statutory guidance. These comprehensive interagency working protocols prioritise the management of allegations and take account of young people's specific vulnerabilities. This protects and promotes young people's safety, welfare and well-being.

Young people live in a safe and well-maintained home. The environment reflects young people's level of tolerance for their surroundings. This means that for some young people bedroom areas are bare and uninspiring, limiting stimulation to reduce young people's anxieties. For other young people, bedroom areas are colourful and personalised. Staff continually review and reassess young people's surroundings to ensure that these continue to meet their needs and promote their safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager registered with Ofsted over this service in October 2013. She holds a number of relevant qualifications relating to the management of specialist children's residential services.

Young people make positive progress in all areas of their development. This is because the registered manager continually prioritises their needs. She is extremely committed and exceptionally skilled. Her knowledge and understanding of each young person's individual needs is commendable. She uses this insight to review young people's progress taking account of their abilities, disabilities, complex behaviours and risks. Together with partner agencies, including placing authorities, the registered manager considers the impact that the service has on young people's day-to-day experiences and overall progress. As a result, the registered manager continually develops and adapts the service to reflect young people's changing needs.

Internal monitoring systems devised and implemented by the registered manager are detailed and meticulous. This enables the evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative information relating to the quality of care that young people receive. The registered manager uses this analysis to review the aims and objectives of the service, as defined by the statement of purpose. This means that placing authorities are fully aware of the range of services that the home provides and how staff support young people. Furthermore, in partnership with speech and language specialists, the registered manager ensures that young people's views and wishes are intrinsic to the service review. Young people use visual aids and social stories to express their likes and dislikes relating to the home. This inclusive method of consultation means that the registered manager is able to consider all young people's opinions, regardless of their communication needs, in her monitoring of the service. This is a considerable strength of the service.

Partnership-working arrangements between the service, placing authorities, other external agencies and young people's families are very positive. One social worker said, 'This is an excellent service and the manager is an excellent practitioner.' A parent commented, 'I absolutely do not know where we would be as a family without [name of provision]. My son has learned so much.' The registered manager is a tenacious advocate for young people. When the actions or inactions of other agencies or specialists means that young people do not have access to the bespoke care that they need, her challenge is professional and effective. As a result, young people benefit from holistic care and support that meets their needs and assists their progress.

Staff are extremely motivated and enthusiastic. All eligible care staff are suitably qualified or working towards attaining relevant qualifications within an acceptable timescale. The registered manager continually reviews internal training programmes to ensure that these reflect young people's individual and complex needs. She complements these formal courses by arranging bespoke sessions with health specialists, including speech and language experts and psychologists. This helps staff to fully understand the specific traits associated with young people's individual disabilities. This in-depth training enables staff to differentiate between the behaviours that young people can control and those that they cannot. As a result, young people benefit from individualised care.

Staff receive regular practice-related supervision. These formal sessions help staff to review their practice and focus on their own learning and development needs. This means that staff are able to recognise the impact their own actions have on young

people's behaviours. Consequently, staff acquire the skills they need to support young people.

The registered manager instils a 'can do' ethos of inclusion in the home. This means that staff ensure that young people have the appropriate choices, opportunities, life chances and prospects, irrespective of any additional challenges they face because of their disabilities.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC361167

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

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, social care inspector

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