

2738396

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2023.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home. The inspector spoke to both children during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are settled and make good progress. They receive individualised care and support that is sensitive to their past experiences of neglect and trauma. One professional said that their child has been the most settled since moving into the home.

A child coming to the home receives a planned and considered admission. Staff visit and talk to the new child as a way of building positive rapport. This helps staff to understand how the child communicates. When they come to live in the home, children are enabled to build a respectful relationship with each other. This is because staff promote healthy, clear and consistent boundaries.

All children attend school and educational provisions and they are achieving academically. Staff encourage a learning culture in the home and when children are not in school they participate in learning activities organised by staff. The manager provides advocacy for children to return to full-time education.

Children are encouraged to develop their independence. Professionals are complimentary of the commitment by staff to ensure that children's overall experiences are good. Staff are alert to signs of distress and encourage children to develop skills and strategies to manage their own internal conflicts. This helps the children to develop positive self-esteem.

Children regularly enjoy time with their families. For those children who return home to live with their family, they are supported to enjoy positive endings. Staff develop 'journey books' which have memories of each child's time in the home. The manager and staff take time to prepare the children to cope emotionally with the move. However, leaders and managers do not always share concerns and offer challenge when the child's transition plan is not timely or clear.

Children know that staff support and care about them. Children are in good health and where specialist help is required, staff ensure that appropriate referrals are made and that these appointments are attended. Daily logs are reflective of the good experiences and care that the children receive. The children enjoy a sense of stability each day.

Children's views are considered. Their wishes and feelings contribute to the children's daily care and future planning. Furthermore, there are monthly meetings and children can spend time separately talking to the manager. The views from these meetings feature on the monthly staff meeting agenda. Children know that they can complain; however, the children's guide does not clearly outline how children can make a complaint.

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

Children say that they feel safe. One parent said the staff have taken very good care of their child and kept them safe. The safety of children and staff's responses to risks is a focus of the home and this is reflected in case records. Managers and staff take opportunities to reflect on experiences; for example, when risks have been exceptionally elevated, and the police were involved to safeguard children. Their attitude helps the children to stay at the centre of practice.

Staff encourage children to contribute to their risk assessments through allowing children to reflect on their experiences and behaviours. This helps children to feel valued and their views heard.

Staff know the individual risks for each child. These are outlined in the effective risk management plans. The manager carefully considers the needs of each child before they come to live at the home to ensure that they are well matched to live together. Known risks, including those in the community, are updated when required. This increases safety for the children, both at home and in their local area.

There has been a reduction in the times when children go missing from the home. When a child is missing, they receive a prompt response from staff, who exhaust all avenues to locate them. When the child returns home, the manager and staff have discussions with the child which may involve the local police. These help the child to reflect on their experience and to support them to keep themselves safer if they choose to go missing again. This demonstrates that staff work well in conjunction with local authorities to safeguard the welfare of children.

The emotional health needs of children are a strong focus of the home. When children are distressed, managers and staff allow them to express their emotions. Staff will sit and talk to the children until they are comforted. This helps children to learn how to manage difficult emotions safely.

Children are rewarded when they accomplish their goals. Rewards include attending special activities and purchasing personal items. This makes them feel proud that their efforts have been noticed and encourages positive behaviour. Staff also enable children to take age-appropriate risks by going out alone in the community and when they return home at the agreed time, they receive positive praise. This helps the children to be responsible and feel trusted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager shows an ambitious vision and has high expectations for children to achieve good outcomes. She provides a supportive environment for staff to be effective in safeguarding the children in their care. The manager is using learning from practice to improve the experiences of children who come to live in the home. This includes implementing changes, which includes a well-considered admission process.

Staff speak positively about their experiences of working in this home. They say that they are supported by the manager. The manager knows the strengths of the staff and areas of development. Although the home has vacant posts, this is not impacting on the care of the children and the manager is working with her recruitment team to fill the posts.

Leaders, managers and staff are supported by the home's clinical psychotherapist. They have been able to have lively and engaging consultations regarding the impact of their own emotional states to understand children's emotional difficulties. Staff reflect openly and honestly with each other and draw on each other for support. This is the basis of the new therapeutic framework that is still to be embedded fully in practice.

Leaders and managers use comprehensive reviewing systems to monitor the quality of care provided. Management oversight of children's case records is strong. Children's progress is tracked at every opportunity; in staff meetings, staff supervisions and through discussions with children. The progress that children make is known and this extends to their cultural needs being promoted and celebrated.

Monthly supervision sessions give staff the opportunity to discuss their practice and care of the children. The manager tracks the progress of new staff to ensure that induction, training and development are effective in meeting the specific needs of the children. This ensures that children receive consistent, good-quality care.

Professionals speak very highly of the staff's care of the children and how staff talk about the children. However, the statement of purpose uses language that is not always reflective of the caring language that staff use to describe children's behaviours.

The home is maintained to a high standard, both internally and in the grounds. Staff encourage children to enjoy activities in the home and in the community. However, opportunities are being missed to showcase some of the children's achievements within their home.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the statement of purpose is kept under review. In particular, some of the language used to describe children's behaviour should be non-stigmatising and child-focused. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's guide is updated as necessary, and make sure children are given explanations of any changes. In particular, the guide should help children understand how to make a complaint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The registered person should ensure that a child moving from the home is prepared to have a positive transition. In particular, staff must work with the placing local authority and contribute to the child's plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- The registered person should ensure that staff maintain a homely environment which is personalised to reflect the children who live there. In particular, some of the children's achievements and memorabilia should be displayed and showcased in their home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 2738396

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Registered provider address: Malvern View, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 4AD

Responsible individual: Leanne Smith

Registered manager: Charlotte Marley-McGowan

Inspector

Tenji Wesa, Social Care Inspector

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