

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	10/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC006294
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Dove Adolescent Services Limited
Responsible individual	Barbara Whittaker
Registered manager	Amanda Farnaby
Inspector	Ros Chapman

Inspection date	10/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. This home provides a good level of care and support to enable young people to make progress and have positive experiences of their time in care. The manager and staff are committed, experienced and competent, and their work is underpinned by comprehensive care and risk management plans that provide good, clear written guidance. One young person is making very good progress in many respects. From a history of non-school attendance, substance misuse and a high incidence of going missing, the young person now regularly attends a mainstream school, rarely goes missing and the substance misuse has reduced significantly. Since the last inspection, three young people have left the home, all in a planned way but in different circumstances. One young person had lived at the home for over two years and the staff worked hard to ensure that the move was right for her. They involved a specialist agency to work with them to ensure that the young person's needs would be met. Staff continue to offer outreach support to ensure that she settles well. Only one young person has moved into the home very recently. This was a planned move. The young person, although not particularly happy to be far away from home, said that staff made her feel welcome and gave her all the information she needed to help her settle. The manager recognises the importance of having the right young people together and is supported by the provider in this approach. There is very clear and comprehensive documentation that demonstrates good risk and impact assessment and how a young person's needs will be met alongside the rest of the group. Young people are kept as safe as possible due to good staffing levels, staff training and clear risk management plans that are followed in practice. For one young person, risk-taking in relation to substance misuse and going missing from care has significantly reduced. When young people do go missing, there are clear protocols that staff follow. Risks from sexual exploitation are carefully managed, including those risks from the use of social media. One young person commented somewhat unhappily: 'Staff take things off me and say it is to keep me safe.' These actions are agreed with the placing authority and form part of the safeguarding plan. Behaviour is managed well and there have been no physical interventions since the last inspection. A social worker commented: 'Staff deal well with anger and are able to de-escalate situations. They know how to manage him.'	

The management team has been improved by the addition of a deputy manager and senior care worker. They have developed a good working relationship and staff comment that this has resulted in a stronger and more positive staff team. Staff feel well supported through regular supervision of their practice. They also have access to improved training opportunities through an online provider. This covers issues such as female genital mutilation, radicalisation, autistic spectrum disorder, life story work and psychoactive substances. Consequently, their knowledge and competence are enhanced, which in turn results in better support for young people.

The manager has good systems to monitor and review what is happening in the home and the impact that has on the progress young people are making. She has improved this by being more specific about the areas to monitor and by sharing tasks with the other members of the management team as a way of supporting their development, while maintaining her own overview. Care plans and risk assessments have also been improved by amalgamating them into one document and making them more streamlined. This makes them more accessible and easier to understand. These plans are now reviewed before every team meeting, so that the staff can have a more effective discussion in the meeting about young people's progression targets and how to achieve them.

Partnership working is effective in supporting young people's improved experiences and progress. The home has good access to a number of agencies that provide specialist advice and support, such as the youth offending team, substance misuse specialists and an independent psychotherapy service. The latter provides regular consultation for the managers, training for staff and opportunities to reflect on the strategies used to improve young people's outcomes. The local police community support officer is a regular visitor to the home and, as she is based with other sections of the police service, she is able to access more specialist advice and support when necessary. She commented: 'There is good information-sharing and we work well together.' Social workers are sent weekly reports to keep them up to date with what is happening to the young person and the progress they are making. This supports consistency of practice. A social worker said: 'I have a good relationship with the home. They send me regular information.'

Three requirements and one recommendation were made at the last inspection. These have been satisfactorily addressed, resulting in a safer and more effective service. There is now greater accountability as all care plans are signed by all parties, and the manager ensures that she endorses all behaviour management measures to indicate her monitoring and review. Notifications are sent promptly to Ofsted, and two employment references are now available for all members of staff. There are systems to ensure that young people's bedrooms are cleaned and tidied at appropriate intervals.

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/08/2016	Full	Good
26/01/2016	Full	Outstanding
08/09/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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