

SC018241

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is a privately run children's home. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 6 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 outstanding because

- Young people enjoy very stable placements, having lived at the home for very long periods. They have grown up in the care of the same staff team, so staff know young people and their families exceptionally well.
- Young people experience extremely high standards of care from a committed and dedicated staff team. Secure and trusting relationships have developed, and young people experience a sense of permanence and belonging.
- Education is given high priority, and all the young people make measurable and sustained progress relative to their starting points.
- Young people are consulted about and supported to participate in all decisions about their lives. Focus work has prepared young people to make sensible choices and to develop strategies to manage their own feelings and emotions.
- The manager and staff are proactive in identifying, managing and responding to risk-taking behaviours. They have highly effective working relationships with professionals in supporting and protecting young people in their care.
- The manager draws on research to inform good practice that has made a positive difference to the lives of the young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/01/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people make measurable and sustained progress. They have enjoyed placement stability and consistency of care. This is because they have grown up in the care of the same staff group in an environment that is highly nurturing, warm and cheerful. Young people have developed very positive attachments with staff who are motivated and well supported by an effective and highly skilled manager. This has been one young person's home for over two years, and she previously experienced a number of placement breakdowns. One parent commented: 'I think the way they look after my son is the best I have even seen; they are like a second family to me and my son.'

Staff actively engage and spend quality time with young people. They have a clear understanding of their likes and dislikes and show a genuine interest in their well-being. Young people enjoy a range of activities of their own choosing, such as going to the gym, karate and scouts, supported by staff, but balanced against the young person's need for increasing independence. One young person recently participated in a national citizenship programme that has led to his make some positive peer friendships.

Staff persevere through challenging times to help young people find their way through life and to help them make positive life choices and develop a strong sense of safety and well-being. As a result, young people are becoming more emotionally resilient and confident and are better able to manage complex family relationships. For one young person, staff have gone above and beyond in facilitating and re-establishing family contact that has progressed from close supervision to overnight stays.

Planning for one young person's move to semi-independence has been highly individualised and tailored to best meet her needs. In collaboration with the leaving care service, focused work on practical skills, such as budgeting, cooking and shopping, has seen the young person feel more confident and take more responsibility in day-to-day decisions. This is testament to the quality of the pre-existing relationships that have been nurtured between staff and the young person. Young people continue to stay in touch with staff after they have left the home and have participated in a video highlighting their positive experiences and achievements.

Encouraging and promoting education and vocational training is a key strength of the home, resulting in young people achieving beyond expectations. Barriers to learning, attendance and attainment are clearly understood by the manager and staff. One young person who has recently re-engaged in formal education has taken a GCSE in maths and skills level one in English. Another young person is now employed at a local café at weekends, following a successful placement, as part of her college catering course.

Young people are consulted and supported to participate in all decisions about their lives. Focus work has prepared young people to make sensible choices and to develop strategies to manage their own feelings and emotions. Life story work is a key component that ensures that the young person takes with them positive memories,

achievements and unforgettable times that, if not recorded, would otherwise be lost.

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

One of the most significant strengths of the home is the quality of the relationships that have been established with young people, which have ensured that they feel protected and are protected from harm. Young people trust the adults who look after them and are able to confide in them any worries or anxieties, knowing that staff will take any concerns seriously and respond appropriately. One young person said: 'I am able to talk about anything. Staff are always on hand to listen and help me sort out my life.'

Staff are very aware of the risks associated with young people going missing from the home and the potential exposure to child sexual exploitation, drug and alcohol misuse and radicalisation. Staff are skilled in identifying and reducing such risks and have used innovative and creative ways to work with the young people on such issues that have captured their interest and increased their knowledge and understanding. This helps young people to become increasingly safe. In the inspector's conversation with the manager, she said: 'We identify themes based on current issues. We recently did work around radicalisation. We are very interactive with the young people.'

The manager and staff are proactive in ensuring that they are fully aware of where the young people are at all times and whom they are associating with. Young people's intimate relationships with others are known and thoroughly assessed to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place. Healthy relationships are encouraged, and staff have welcomed family and close friends into the home. One young person said: 'I have been with my boyfriend for three years. We are engaged. Staff know him very well and he has been invited to stay at the caravan.'

Staff are highly skilled at dealing with challenging behaviour and understand the individual triggers to emotional distress. The use of physical restraint is extremely rare. Young people increasingly respond to the boundaries and expectations set for them. When things go wrong, staff persevere to help young people reflect on and adjust their behaviour. Sanctions and consequences used are proportionate and agreed by the young person, and restorative practice has led to a greater understanding and a significant reduction in negative behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has a broad range of skills and experience of working with young people. She is suitably qualified and is ambitious in her drive to facilitate an environment of continuous learning and development. She has managed this home for several years and is well respected by staff and other professionals.

In considering new referrals, the manager draws on the collective knowledge of the staff team, and any decisions made are underpinned by risk assessments that look at the

potential impact on young people who are already living at the home. As appropriate, young people are involved in and participate in welcoming any new admissions. This ensures that new placements get off to a good start and that the competing and complex needs of all young people can be successfully met.

The manager has high aspirations and expectations of the staff and demonstrates effective leadership qualities. She is a confident advocate for young people. Care planning, case recording and behaviour management plans reflect the highly individualised care. They are child centred and the voice of the young person is clearly visible in these documents. Recording activity underpins the outstanding practice in achieving good outcomes for young people. A professional commented on the quality of work: 'There have been a lot of issues re. education but [the manager] has been proactive in supporting [the young person] to access an alternative provision. I feel the home [has] gone that extra mile with this young person and [has] supported her well through difficult times.'

Monitoring the quality of care is robust, and the manager utilises a range of processes to evaluate progress, outcomes and areas of continued development. Feedback from the young people, parents and carers, professionals and other stakeholders is the method used by the manager to evaluate progress in relation to each young person's starting point. Internal auditing and regulatory reports have provided independent evaluative feedback and learning that are used by the manager in enabling the young people to reach their full potential.

The manager regularly relies on research to inform the use of good practice models and approaches in understanding behaviours. She regularly disseminates learning to her staff team, which has included topics such as attachment and risk, life story work and mental health. All staff training has relevance to the lives of the young people, their childhood experiences and how these have impacted on current behaviour. Staff receive exceptionally high levels of support through regular training opportunities, supervision and team meetings.

The close working practices between the manager and the staff team are replicated in the effective partnership working with parents and professionals. This enables the home to act on any known risks and deliver services that effectively meet all the young people's needs to a consistently high standard.

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 difference 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: SC018241

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Registered provider address: 170 Southgate, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 1QJ

Responsible individual: Barbara Whittaker

Registered manager: Leanne Smith

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, social care inspector

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