

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	12/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC018241
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Dove Adolescent Services Limited
Registered person address	170 Southgate, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 1QJ

Responsible individual	Barbara Whittaker
Registered manager	Leanne Smith
Inspector	Judith Longden

Inspection date	12/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC018241

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff liaise with a range of organisations to secure appropriate educational placements and to ensure young people can achieve their educational outcomes. Contact with family has significantly improved for some young people.
- Young people are involved in their care and the running of the home and are actively engaged in reviewing their progress. Their confidence and self-esteem improves as a result.
- Young people are able to move on, or in some cases return to their families, because of the stability this home provides and the care they receive.
- The help and protection afforded to young people is outstanding. They are increasingly safe because of living here. This is because of excellent partnership work and a commitment from the staff to keep them as safe as possible. Young people learn how to reduce risks and take responsibility for their own safety.
- Working with others is a real strength of this home. This not only keeps young people safe but also helps them to make good progress. Staff learn effectively through working and training with others and increase their knowledge and skills.
- The registered manager is very experienced and well qualified. She and the staff team are exceptionally motivated and strive for continual improvement.
- No requirements or recommendations have been made.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. It is registered to provide accommodation for up to four children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. When young people need additional support to move into independent living they can stay at the home after they are 18.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/04/2014	Full	Good
17/09/2013	Interim	Good progress
15/05/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
The home is welcoming and provides a nurturing family environment. Young people feel cared for and enjoy positive relationships with staff. There are occasions when group dynamics lead to some disruptive behaviour, but staff deal with these incidents swiftly and effectively. Staff work tirelessly to secure appropriate educational opportunities for young people and liaise with a range of organisations to ensure young people can achieve their educational outcomes. Young people are actively involved in their educational plans, one social worker commented, 'Staff support young people to attend educational review meetings to share their views on their education options.' Staff acknowledge the impact of young people's experiences and work hard to help them address, and work through these, to enable them to participate positively in learning activities and formal education. Staff also provide educational activities in the home and local community ensuring young people benefit from a range of learning. Young people are encouraged to be healthy. A range of healthy, varied, and home-cooked meals ensures young people have the opportunity to eat healthily. Staff work hard to help young people understand why they are in care and help them to deal with their feelings and emotions. They work closely with a number of health agencies including the child and adolescent mental health service and local therapeutic support services. Staff continue to utilise these services even when young people are not engaging. This enables staff to continue to learn how to support young people in the home. They are committed to providing a range of good, positive memories for young people, which enables them to develop confidence and improve their self-esteem. Life-story books and photo albums provide a lasting memory for young people of their time here. One young person, who has recently moved on from the home, wrote to the staff saying, 'Thank you for all the help and support you have given me in my time here, I will never forget you.' Staff support and facilitate contact to ensure it is safe and enjoyable. They work closely with families and communicate effectively ensuring good, consistent boundaries. This has enabled some young people to increase their contact to include overnight stays. Young people are encouraged to form appropriate friendships and relationships	

and staff work with other agencies to ensure these are as safe as possible. Friends are able to participate in activities and young people enjoy a range of leisure pursuits such as skating, cinema, pamper nights, and horse riding.

Staff help young people prepare for moving on from the home. They learn a number of skills to help them understand what it is like to live independently. The registered manager liaises effectively with placing authorities to ensure placements change in the best interests of the young person and as smoothly as possible. On one occasion, when a young person was not happy with his placing authority's decision, staff supported him to access an advocate and formulate a complaint. This resulted in a more positive move for the young person. Young people are able to move on, or in some cases return to their families, because of the stability this home has provided. One social worker commented, 'The placement in my professional view has been brilliant and staff have gone above and beyond. The young person himself has spoken very positively of his experience and considering his historical experiences of care this is a huge compliment'.

Care planning is very good and young people are fully involved. Good focus work sessions enable staff and young people to address objectives of the care plan and follow up on any incidents. This helps young people achieve their potential. Staff and young people regularly review progress and identify further areas to achieve. This enhances their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people are very involved in their care and in the operation of the home, using a variety of consultation methods. These include resident meetings, individual consultations, reviews, and on occasions, young people choose to join staff meetings to share their views. They help purchase new furniture and furnishings for the home, which helps them to take ownership of the house. One young person has been very involved in the revision of the young people's guide, including putting it on a DVD. This makes it more accessible to young people.

The registered manager is reviewing the future placement of young people to this home, ensuring thorough risk assessments of shared living are undertaken and there is an appropriate mix of young people. The manager is committed to ensuring the current young people are settled and making good progress before a new young person joins the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
Exceptional multi-agency working ensures young people are increasingly safe	

because of living here. Risk reduces through thorough information sharing, review of progress and working together. One professional commented, 'Information sharing is very good. Staff have been brilliant with other professionals. Liaison is brilliant. Incidents have reduced since she has been living here and staff keep her safe.' Young people say they feel safe, though sometimes staff are, 'over protective', but they recognise that staff want them to be safe because they care about them. Young people are involved in their own safety and well-being, learning how to reduce risks and taking responsibility for their own safety. One member of staff said, 'You have got to give the kids the credit; they have been involved in their care and investing in their safety'.

There are excellent relationships between staff, the police, missing person's coordinator, and sexual exploitation team. This ensures young people understand the risks of going missing from the home and there is consistency in implementing procedures in the event of any absence. Managers and senior staff share good practice and discuss sexual exploitation concerns with their peers in private provider forums. This ensures practice is up to date and staff are aware of any new resources or research.

Incidents of going missing and the associated risks of sexual exploitation have substantially reduced as staff work with young people to set appropriate boundaries and build strong trusting relationships. Given the history that some young people have, this is a significant improvement and testament to the hard work of the staff and young people in maintaining their safety. Excellent records of any incidents detail all the information necessary to enable as swift a return as possible. A thorough analysis of the event and possible triggers enables staff to devise strategies to try to prevent any future incidents. One social worker commented, 'If she is missing staff always deal with it appropriately and keep me well informed. It's fantastic.'

Staff regularly review the exceptionally detailed risk assessments and record any changes to risk, any new risk, and progress made in reducing previous concerns. The physical environment is safe whilst maintaining the homely feel, and regular health and safety checks ensure young people remain safe. Staff and young people take part in regular fire drills so they know what to do in the event of a fire.

Very robust recruitment processes including in depth discussions with candidates about their voluntary work, securing additional references and exploring any possible medical concerns, prevents unsuitable people from gaining employment in the home.

The registered manager has an excellent relationship with the local authority safeguarding officer. Constant communication ensures they are informed of any complaints or allegations made by young people, even if young people retract these immediately. This means young people's comments are taken seriously, matters escalate as appropriate, and any issues are thoroughly investigated.

Following a recommendation made at the previous inspection, the manager has reviewed and revised the recording of physical intervention and restraint. Detailed records provide a good account of any incident including any possible triggers for the behaviour and a comprehensive review with staff and young people involved. Although incidents are very rare, only two interventions in the past year, staff clearly understand how to intervene appropriately and keep up to date with training in intervention methods.

Staff have dealt with some very challenging behaviours and managed incidents very well. They have notified all relevant parties of any serious incidents. Staff took action to address racially abusive language in the home, involving other professionals to help young people understand the legalities and consequences of such behaviour. Young people's behaviour improves as relationships develop and young people understand and respect boundaries.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
The registered manager is very experienced, well qualified, extremely organised, and exceptionally motivated. 'Standing still' is not an option she says. This motivation and desire to provide the very best care reflects in the whole team ethos and way of working. The staff team is excellent. The addition of a number of new staff brings a wealth of life experiences to the team. All staff clearly understand the service's strengths and areas for development. Support and training for the staff is excellent. An in depth induction provides the foundation for continual, high quality training. Training is delivered using a variety of methods and includes mandatory courses and those relevant to the needs of the young people currently placed in the home. Staff and managers are very effective at disseminating learning to their colleagues, increasing the whole team's knowledge and skills. Staff feel extremely well supported through effective and regular supervision, team meetings, and daily handovers. Regular contact with the local psychotherapy team provides further support and a range of strategies for working effectively with young people. One member of staff commented, 'I have been working for the organisation for many years in various settings and this is the happiest I have ever been. It is a great team with excellent managers.' A real strength of this home is the exceptional partnership work, which ensures	

young people receive good care, make progress, and are increasingly safe. Staff continue to maintain contact with a range of services even if young people are no longer engaging. This maintains good links and ensures services are available when needed. Where young people feel let down by other professionals, staff support them to complain effectively and voice their concerns. The registered manager offers challenge to others where necessary to ensure young people receive the appropriate services.

Internal and external monitoring systems are used to very good effect. An independent visitor attends monthly to review the care and safety of young people and the manager promptly addresses any shortfalls identified. The registered manager's regular review of care is very evaluative and reflective, providing high quality analysis of the service and identifying areas for future development. A variety of monitoring tools such as journey files, progress reports, and scrapbooks identify the progress young people make. The use of 'wow sheets' highlights special moments and additional achievements. A member of staff said, 'We use them for those moments when something happens and a 'wow' just needs to be recorded and this boosts young people's self-esteem.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 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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