

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC018241
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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	Jennifer Fenlon

Inspection date	20/12/2016
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
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's provision is outstanding because:

- Children and young people are consistently supported to understand and manage their behaviours, which significantly reduces the risk of harm.
- Children and young people are helped to recognise and see the value of the vast progress that they are making, across all areas of their lives.
- Staff continually update their knowledge and skills and are innovative in their approach to ensuring that they optimise the care provided to individual children and young people.
- The registered manager is forward thinking and continually strives to improve the quality of care for children and young people.
- Children and young people are helped to live together and get on well with each other. Staff understand the complexities of group living and implement purposeful, focused working and planning to maintain harmonious living.
- Children's and young people's views are highly regarded and they are actively encouraged to make decisions about the running of the home. Their needs and views are carefully considered and valued when planning future placement admissions.
- Staff have established excellent relationships with professionals and families, and highly effective communication and partnership working enables the needs of children and young people to be fully met.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review of quality of care should focus on. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)
This is with particular reference to the registered person including consultation with parents and partner agencies as part of their analysis and evaluation of the home's performance.
- The registered person must be confident that the person delivering the care will do so in a way that is safe and appropriate for the individual child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 18, paragraph 3.32)
This is with particular reference to ensuring that new staff are consistent in their approach to de-escalating incidents.
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
This is with particular reference to repairing the damage caused by the plumbing difficulties in the upstairs bathroom.
- Homes are required to develop and keep under review a 'statement of purpose'. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
This is with particular reference to the statement of purpose being updated to reflect the recent changes in the staffing.
- Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.20).
This is with particular reference to improving recording to show whether children and young people were present when their rooms were being searched.

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/01/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/04/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Children and young people experience an exceptional level of care. This is because staff support them to manage the dynamics of group living and build harmonious relationships. This enables children and young people to sustain long-term placements, providing them with stability and an unmistakable sense of permanence when this is part of their care plan and belonging. A professional reported that for one young person the home has now become their place of safety and security: previously this was the hospital. In addition a social worker said: 'This is the longest placement that she has been in.' Children and young people are making excellent individual progress across all aspects of their development. For example, from difficult starting points, one young person has achieved 100% school attendance and another has gained several GCSE qualifications. With the support of staff, young people have been given the confidence to give evidence during court proceedings and contribute to the wider good of the community by raising money for charity. A professional reported that a young person: 'Has made more progress here than in all their previous time in care.' If problems emerge with attendance or the suitability of educational provision, the manager ensures that these are resolved as quickly as possible. For example, when a young person was refused a placement at college, this was proactively challenged and the decision was subsequently overturned. The young person is now successfully attending and working towards a qualification. Children and young people have meaningful time and attention invested in them, enabling them to build significant trusting relationships with staff. They can identify an adult within the home whom they feel close to and who responds well to their needs. For one young person this is the registered manager, who accompanies them to therapeutic sessions. A professional said: 'I am really impressed with the care given to X. This is allowing her to develop strong relationships with staff.' Children's and young people's physical and emotional health needs are given high priority and as a result they are fit and healthy and their psychological health is significantly improved. Staff develop their knowledge and skills and work effectively with other agencies to ensure that children and young people get the services they need. One professional commented that a young person is: 'Making great progress in respect on their mental health.' Through the support of staff, the young person can now link their behaviours to their feelings, and this has resulted in a reduction in the number and severity of incidents. A mental health agency commented that they are: 'Impressed with how psychologically-minded the home is', and note the	

excellent practice in therapeutic parenting. 'This is really important in helping children and young people recover from previous trauma and abuse.'

Improved family contact is a source of significant development to some children and young people, helping them to establish solid foundations for their future relationships. For example, one young person who had no contact with their parent now has overnight stays.

Children's and young people's wishes and feelings inform decision-making processes and the development of the home, and practice in this area is really innovative. For example, one young person created a short film about the home. This is available for children and young people alongside the children's guide. Children and young people have produced a song that is played at recruitment interviews and their questions are included in the interview process. In addition, the manager actively encourages the children and young people to provide feedback about staff practice, which is then incorporated into annual staff appraisals.

Children and young people are supported to develop their life skills and prepare for independence. This includes using public transport independently and developing practical skills, such as shopping for food within a budget and cooking meals. When young people move on from the home, they can still rely on support from staff. For example, staff stayed overnight with one young person on their first night in their new home.

Children and young people are provided with the opportunity to develop new skills and gain positive life experiences. They enjoy a range of activities, including trips to theme parks and, recently, to pantomimes. Children and young people also have friends in the community who are made welcome to the home.

Children and young people are given a life story book to celebrate their time at the home. These books are also useful in helping children and young people to understand and safely question elements of their identity. For one young person this included discussions around paganism, which the staff researched to help this young person understand their family's beliefs.

Children and young people live in a home that is warm and welcoming. The decoration is chosen through consultation with the children and young people and is to a high standard. However, there is water damage in a shower room and the reason for this is yet to be established. This detracts from an otherwise excellent environment for children and young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Children and young people are able to recognise the quality of care that they receive. They showed their appreciation to staff by making them a special lunch, with a banner that read: 'Thank you for caring for us.' A young person asked: 'Why do Ofsted come to the home, as everything is OK here?' Children's and young people's needs and risks are thoroughly explored when new placements are being considered. The manager gives careful consideration to the mix and stability of the current group of children and young people. For example, the manager rejected approximately 400 referrals over a 13 month period. A social worker said: 'They have gone the extra mile, and struggled to get a right match, but the manager waited for the right placement.' Children and young people are supported to understand the impact of their behaviours and staff are innovative in their approach to bringing about positive change. Children and young people are helped to understand the dangers of social media, such as helping young people to understand how to keep themselves safe on social media. This is promoting the development of self-worth and confidence for individual children. The challenges of group living are recognised and children and young people are supported to develop consideration and acceptance of others. Staff persistently work to protect them from experiencing discriminatory behaviours. Any form of bullying is challenged, and is regularly discussed with children and young people. When children and young people display challenging behaviours, staff manage these incidents exceedingly well. Staff employ a restorative approach to poor behaviour. This helps children and young people to develop empathy for others and to learn the value of forgiveness. A professional said: 'In between those difficult behaviours, the staff never lose sight of who a young person can be.' Staff are skilled at de-escalating challenging situations. However, new staff are not always consistent in employing such techniques. This may lead to such incidents becoming unmanageable. Children and young people are cared for in a way that reduces risks, and as a result risks, such as child sexual exploitation, have significantly reduced. Staff work very effectively with relevant agencies to formulate plans and strategies to promote the safety and well-being of young people. This means that any concerns or risks identified are quickly reduced through prompt implementation. The police confirm this and report that: 'The communication with the home is fabulous. The number of missing episodes have significantly reduced and this is because the staff are outstanding at managing behaviours, and actively respond to	

the needs of children and young people to reduce risk.'

Staff are aware of safeguarding procedures, which supports the protection of children and young people. Staff's top priority is to help and protect children and young people, and they take appropriate measures to protect those in their care. Both professionals and parents confirm that children and young people are safe.

On occasion, staff have needed to search a child or young person's bedroom to manage risk. However, it is not clear from the recording whether young people have been present or not. This shortfall has no impact on young people but would demonstrate that room searches are being conducted fairly.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager has managed the home since 2014. She is well qualified and forward thinking, continually striving to improve the quality of care provided to children and young people. She is described as a 'motivational leader', who ensures that her team shares her ethos and vision for the home so that they can make a real difference to the lives of children and young people. The manager and staff fulfil the home's statement of purpose and their work has a real impact on outcomes for children and young people. However, the statement of purpose does require updating to reflect recent staff changes. The manager is supportive to her staff team and is able to identify its strengths and areas for support and development. This process of assessment is embedded in regular and comprehensive supervisions and development reviews. The manager has thorough oversight of the home's operation and staff practices and has developed an internal auditing tool to support this. Monitoring is therefore strong, but could be further developed by evaluating the contribution of parents and professionals. Children's and young people's records are detailed and reflective, providing a clear picture of their journey and progress. This assists the manager in setting new objectives and identifying where additional needs require further attention. Staff use reflective practice to explore and discuss their response to children's and young people's needs, and how they can be more effective. They use shared learning, training and research to inform this process. This ensures that children and young people are looked after by staff who use 'best practice' to provide them with the best possible care.	

Partnership working is a strength of the home. Professionals speak highly of the verbal and written communication with staff. They report that the staff are proactive in working together with them to support children and young people. This helps them achieve excellent outcomes and ensures that their time at the home is successful and fulfilling.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 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 whom 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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