

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC018241
Inspector	Simon Morley
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 Anne Whittaker
Registered manager	Leanne Smith / POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	17/09/2013

Inspection date	30/04/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	No enforcement action has been taken.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Children and young people enjoy and benefit from the good and in some cases, excellent outcomes across all aspects of their growth and well-being. The flexible, effective and individually tailored care and support from staff impacts positively upon children and young people's social, educational, behavioural and personal growth and progress.

Children and young people are supported to express their views and give their opinions about the quality of the care they receive. They do not always agree with decisions but are helped to understand why they are made. Staff are highly motivated and effective in supporting positive changes in children's lives. As a result children feel valued and have positive relationships with staff. Placement stability, the ability of staff to build positive relationships with children and young people leads to a significant reduction in challenging and risky behaviours.

Children and young people are treated as individuals. The strong care planning arrangements ensure that individual diverse needs are well addressed. As a result, children and young people learn to trust in the staff who care for them and start to develop a positive self-view of themselves. Good practice is followed for keeping children and young people safe. This helps to reduce risks and ensures children and

young people feel safe and secure. Behaviour is well managed and staff have clear expectations of the children and young people at the home. Staff are consistent in their approach, adopting strategies based on individual needs which results in children and young people developing positive behaviour.

The majority of care records are in good order and this assists with personalised care planning. There are some shortfalls in the records of sanctions and physical intervention but this does not impact on the quality of behaviour management practice. Notification reports of significant incidents involving children and young people are not sent to Ofsted in a timely manner. The last internal monitoring report of the quality of care is out of date. Statutory requirements are made from this inspection to address these areas.

Since the last inspection a new manager has been appointed and has made significant improvements in a number of areas. She is also effective in swiftly tackling areas of weakness which have been highlighted by the monitoring of the Registered Provider. The strengths of the home and any areas of concern are well understood by the new manager which means that any problems are put right quickly. There are good arrangements for staff training and development which ensures that children are cared for by competent staff.

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 more independent living they can stay at the home after they are 18.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/09/2013	Interim	good progress
15/05/2013	Full	good
31/01/2013	Interim	good progress
27/06/2012	Full	adequate

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	ensure the details of the approach to behavioural support in the statement of purpose includes how persons working in the home are trained and how their competence is assessed (Regulation 4 (1))	27/06/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that written records of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline include the time and location of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3) (d))	27/06/2014
17B (2001)	ensure where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record under paragraph (3) must include the details of any methods used to avoid the need	27/06/2014

	to use that measure (Regulation 17B (4) (b))	
30 (2001)	notify Her Majesty's Chief Inspector without delay if any of the events listed in Schedule 5 of this regulation take place (Regulation 30 (1))	27/06/2014
34 (2001)	supply a copy of reports made under this regulation to HMCI. (Regulation 34 (2))	30/05/2014

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people benefit from developing trusting and positive relationships with the staff and commented 'all the staff are nice'. Children and young people are actively encouraged through individual ways appropriate to their needs and understanding to explore their own personal experiences. They engage in life-story work and support from counselling and mental health services to help promote their emotional well-being and resilience. The staff team consistently encourage children and young people to engage in this support. As a result children and young people are more open about their feelings, improve their behaviour, engage more in the community, are able to return to education and develop more independence. Positive outcomes help children and young people return home where this is part of their care plan.

Children and young people respond to staff drive and commitment towards developing healthy lifestyles. This discourages smoking, improves healthy diets and supports individual hobbies and interests in exercise and gym membership. Staff use an individualised approach targeted towards children and young people's diverse lifestyle choices and interests. The excellent impact on emotional health has eliminated self-harming behaviour and the frequency with which children and young people abscond from the home has significantly reduced. One social worker commented, 'young people flourish in this setting'. The safe, secure and nurturing environment results in children and young people developing an improved sense of self-worth and a renewed confidence in who they are.

Children and young people benefit from the continuity of school placements when the home is near to their own local area. Individuals who have previous poor attendance have made excellent progress in starting new educational programmes and also develop new skills from undertaking work experience. Young people stand to make continued progress in this regard because of the support to consider their individual wishes and needs and are able to explore different options of further education post sixteen.

Children and young people's needs, wishes and views make a significant contribution to the daily running of the home. Their contributions to decisions are highly valued and acted upon. One recent example was altering the incentive scheme, there are plans to develop the garden area including a new trampoline. Staff have also created a themed environment in the home based on trains and trainspotting hobbies.

Family contact is an important aspect of children and young people's lives that is very well supported by staff. This includes helping young people with regular long distance travel, inviting and welcoming family members into the home to ensure young people get the very best from such arrangements. The manager and staff work proactively

with families using their suggestions to develop care plans. Examples include the use of snorkels and toys in the bath to improve hygiene and parents being involved in bedtime routines to help improve sleep patterns.

Life skills and independence are developed based on individual needs including travel, cooking, budgeting, shopping and opening bank accounts. Children and young people progress well in accessing their local community and benefitting from the additional experiences, particularly when there has been little previous participation outside their care setting. As a result children and young people work towards their transition to adulthood helped by sensitive support from staff to overcome anxiety about these next steps.

Quality of care

good

Children and young people respond well to the individual members of staff, one commented, 'staff care about me' The calm, reassuring and nurturing approach to care helps children and young people to feel safe, secure and build relationships with the adults looking after them.

The current group of children and young people have a wide range of differing needs based on their age, gender, understanding, backgrounds and experiences. Positive outcomes and progress are promoted through an effective key-working system, high staffing levels and individual focus work. This includes individual work about self-harm, absconding, self-esteem, behaviour and independence as well as promoting hobbies and interests.

Detailed individual placement plans capture the presenting and changing needs of all children and young people. They contribute to these plans and are actively encouraged to participate at their own care reviews and other meetings about their future. Placing social workers all say that communication from the staff and manager is very good and they confirm that children and young people make good progress as a result of the care they receive. The new manager has reviewed the format of the care plans with a better focus on the positive outcomes children and young people experience.

In the event of new placements the manager persistently and appropriately challenges placing authorities until all of the required information for good quality care planning is received. Future placements are being considered very carefully to ensure an appropriate match with existing children and young people living at the home.

Proactive planning keeps children and young people occupied in a range of activities including singing, going to the gym, walks, train rides, train spotting and trips out. Children and young people are able to personalise their bedrooms, enjoy computer games and can keep some pets. Staff have adopted a train theme using signs, tickets

and real-time computer games in one part of the home to encourage individual hobbies.

Varied consultation forums and processes ensure that children and young people are effectively supported to give their views and opinions about all aspects of their care. This includes meetings, key worker sessions, independent visitors, a suggestion box and care planning. Along with the day to day interaction with staff this ensures children and young people are at the heart of what happens in the home. The recent change to the reward system has helped children and young people identify new goals linked to realistically achievable progress in behaviour. This has helped children and young people focus achieve positive outcomes such as reduction in risky behaviour and developing social skills.

Staff have a very good understanding of the individual aspects and needs of children and young people. Behaviour management plans are very well linked to their individual traits and personalities. Children and young people also know the systems that are in place for more serious concerns and do make use of the complaints procedure. These concerns are positively responded to which helps improve relationships between children, young people and staff.

Staff strive to provide children and young people with an educational approach towards their own health care supporting them to improve their lifestyles. Staff are able to guide children and young people through every day conversation and key working sessions. This includes one to one time talking about behaviour, personal safety, diets, smoking, relationships, exploitation and life story work. Great emphasis is placed upon overcoming the difficulties children and young people experience with their emotional and psychological well-being. Individual strategies such as artwork, letter writing to communicate feelings or sending blank text messages to staff as a mean of communicating low mood help children and young people talk about difficult emotions. This is supported well through accessing appropriate external therapeutic services. This helps children and young people open up and talk about their feelings and develop coping strategies.

Education is given a high priority. All children and young people have good attendance at school or college. Where children and young people are not able to sustain full time education placements they have weekly education planners which include a mixture of in-house provision, work experience and life skills to promote a holistic education. Staff strive to promote the value of education to all children and young people to keep them interested and motivated about their futures.

Children and young people live in a well furnished, homely and safe environment which they have personalised. Each person enjoys the privacy of their own bedroom and there is ample communal space. The new manager has changed some of the rooms around to improve the communal areas children and young people use and allow for more effective supervision when they are in the home. The new manager has made good progress in assessing the location of the home with regard to

promoting the welfare of children and young people in line with new regulations.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Children and young people say they feel safe within the home and that staff care about how they feel. Safeguarding the welfare of children and young people has a high priority evident in the practice of staff. When children and young people do engage in unsafe behaviours, staff are consistent in appropriately supporting them to change.

Staff regularly undertake safeguarding training which is frequently refreshed. The new manager has recently reviewed safeguarding procedures with all staff ensuring they know what action to take should any child or young person disclose any harm or be at risk of harm. Any concerns are reported appropriately to other safeguarding agencies such as the police, local authority and placing authorities to ensure children and young people are protected.

A well trained staff team is further complemented by the manager's efforts in developing a positive working relationship with the police and local authority. The manager attends meetings and forums with the local authority to work collaboratively in the best interests of safeguarding children and young people. Policy and procedural guidance for staff in terms of being missing children and young people is in line with local authority and police protocols. The new manager has reviewed the home's missing child policy ensuring it is up to date and reflects good practice

If necessary extra staff are on duty to support children and young people with particular needs. Risks to the safety of children and young people are comprehensively assessed and there are robust strategies in place. The new manager has ensured any out of date assessments have been reviewed and reflect the current needs of children and young people. The high quality of care practice has contributed to children and young people no longer self-harming and the frequency of absconding has decreased significantly. This reflects for children and young people an increase in their self-esteem, emotional resilience and feeling safe and secure in the home.

Staff provide one-to-one support for children and young people to learn about personal safety, exploitation and internet safety, helping them to make sensible decisions about their behaviour. There is a constructive approach to e-safety, promoting education and safe use of media through the trusting relationships staff build with children and young people.

There is no bullying in the home. Staff encourage respect and tolerance and high

staffing levels ensure appropriate and safe supervision of children and young people. Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour between children and young people are addressed swiftly. On these rare occasions the manager and staff work closely with placing authorities to ensure there are effective strategies in place to keep children and young people safe.

There is a good track record of helping children and young people improve their behaviour. Staff are skilled in using their relationships with children and young people to de-escalate potential incidents. This is evident through the care records and progress children and young people make. It is not often that staff have to physically intervene as a means of behaviour management and this has reduced in frequency. Any such intervention is minimal and used as a last resort. There are some administrative errors in the records relating to both the use of physical intervention and use of sanctions. The new manager plans to address these and the shortfalls do not impact on how well staff support children and young people to manage their feelings and cope with difficult situations.

Children and young people are suitably protected by the Registered Provider's recruitment practice in assessing and vetting new staff to work in the home. All visitors have their identity verified and they are appropriately supervised during their visit to ensure the safety of children and young people. The physical environment is safe and appropriately secure. Previous shortfalls in any health and safety monitoring have been addressed by the new manager.

Leadership and management

adequate

There has been a recent change in management of the home. The Registered Provider has appointed a new manager who is qualified and experienced in managing a children's home. The new manager has applied for registration with Ofsted and since taking up her post two months ago has started to make improvements to the service. There remain a number of administrative shortfalls which the new manager plans to improve on.

Since the last inspection the Registered Provider's monitoring of the management of the home has significantly improved. There is a much better focus on the impact of the setting on how well children and young people progress as well as reporting on their views of the service and views of other stakeholders. Shortfalls highlighted in the quality assurance reports completed by the Registered Provider had not been previously addressed. The new manager has resolved all of these contributing to the effectiveness of risk management and evaluation of behaviour management in the home. The last in-house quality report due to be completed by the manager reviewing the quality of care has not yet been sent to Ofsted and is overdue. The new manager verbally undertook to rectify this as soon as possible.

The new manager has also improved the deputising arrangements ensuring the

home is run well in her absence. The organisation of care records has improved with a stronger focus on achieving positive outcomes and progress for children and young people. The rewards system has been reviewed after consultation with children and young people helping support their progress with more meaningful goals. The required action from the last inspection has not been met. No progress was made by the previous manager with regard to notifying Ofsted without delay of any significant incidents involving children and young people. There have been no such incidents since the new manager took up post and she plans to ensure practice improves should such a notification be required.

The new manager understands the current strengths and weaknesses of the home. She has reviewed the development plan highlighting future improvements and has amended the Statement of Purpose. One section of this document requires more details as it is not clear about the arrangements for the training and assessment for staff in physical intervention.

The manager demonstrates a very clear understanding of her role and relationship with placing authorities. All placing authorities commented very positively about the timing and quality of the progress information they receive. The care records maintained on a daily basis are of good quality. Placement plans, reviews and key working sessions have improved giving a better picture of the journey children and young people make since admission to the home.

The staff team receive a wide range of training to ensure they are able to meet the diverse and individual needs of children and young people. Half of the staff have achieved the required care qualification. The other half have undertaken a thorough induction process and have all started their qualifications to meet the set timescales. As a result children and young people receive well planned, competent care. The new manager ensures there is a good mix of staff combining experience, different skills, strengths and gender to be able to offer the style of care best suited for each child and young person.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.