

SC035241

Registered provider: Doncaster Deaf Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a charitable trust. It provides care for up to 9 children who have sensory impairment. The home operates as one home but with 2 accommodation provisions, providing accommodation for up to 6 children in one provision and 3 children in the other.

The home provides planned care on a 52-week basis, 38-week educational residential placements and short-breaks care for children who attend the charitable trust's school.

This registered children's home is part of a specialist school that provides education on site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school. At the time of the inspection, 6 children were living at the home, and 4 were present and consulted with during the inspection. All of the children's care was planned over a 38-week, term-time educational residential placement.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2012 and is suitably experienced and qualified for this role.

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 January 2026

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: 3 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2024	Full	Outstanding
23/01/2024	Full	Outstanding
22/11/2022	Full	Outstanding
23/11/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children living in this home flourish. Children are supported by skilled and knowledgeable staff who consistently prioritise their care and wellbeing. Staff have an excellent understanding of each child and have high expectations for them. This inspires children to reach their potential. Family members described the care children receive as 'life-changing' because of the high standards and opportunities provided.

The experience of living at the home transforms children's lives. Most children arrive with limited confidence, emerging identities, low self-esteem and disrupted experiences of education and social relationships. Staff offer the children consistent high-quality care, skilled guidance and unwavering encouragement and nurturing. By the time children leave the home they have self-belief and clear aspirations for their future.

Staff celebrate the children's lives and create personalised photo albums with messages from friends and staff who have been part of their development journey. This helps children develop a powerful sense of belonging. The home becomes an extension of their family, and children who have moved on from the home stay in touch and visit the staff and the home. Families feel included in their children's lives.

Children live in an environment that actively promotes trusting relationships and friendships. Staff use creative and inclusive approaches, including games to encourage taking turns and understanding winning and losing. For some children, this has been their first experience of forming friendships. Children living at the home show great care and respect towards each other. Children grow in all areas from their starting points and develop resilience and confidence.

Staff plan highly individualised support for children moving in or out of the home, and they show exceptional care and attention. Staff support children to explore and research their future placements, supporting visits and discussing options so that children can make informed decisions about their futures. A clear and well-structured admissions process also helps children moving into the home to settle and grow in confidence quickly.

Children are exceptionally well prepared for independence and adulthood. Plans focus on each child's aspirations, and staff work closely with children, their families and professionals to ensure consistency. Staff offer children natural, purposeful opportunities to develop essential independence and self-care skills. When children leave, they have clear aspirations for their futures and confidence in their ability to achieve their goals. A professional said, '(child's name) would not be the young person they are now without the support from the manager and staff team, they have been amazing.'

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

Children feel safe and supported at the home. One child said, 'I don't have any worries, all staff keep me safe. I can speak to all staff, they understand any problems and are lovely.'

Staff provide highly effective support for children's emotional wellbeing. They use creative communication methods to help children feel understood and supported. Children's plans are created with their involvement and offer children clear, practical guidance on how to seek support. Staff are sensitive to children's moods and closely monitor their wellbeing. The manager makes timely referrals to other professionals who can help when needed.

Careful planning and engagement with children lead to opportunities for children to take age-appropriate risks. For one child this meant that they started to walk to school on their own. The child's safety awareness has continually developed and is now mirrored in their family life, increasing their ability to keep themselves safer in all settings.

Staff help children to be safer online. Children take part in fun information sessions with staff. Staff talk openly with children about their online activity and monitor concerns appropriately.

Children flourish from staff's approach to positive behaviour support. Staff treat the children with care and affection. Staff continually praise children for their achievements and affirm their personalities. Children develop strong self-awareness and positive behaviour. One child previously struggled to identify when jokes were appropriate and when to stop. Adults embraced the child's character and have supported the child in developing positive social awareness.

Children do not go missing from this home, but the manager does not take this for granted. She has created plans and completed mock exercises with staff to ensure that they know how to respond if a child goes missing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager provides highly effective and inspirational leadership. She is ambitious and influential, demonstrating unwavering aspiration for every child. She takes pride in children's achievements and relentlessly drives innovation. As a result, children receive exceptional care and support that enable them to flourish.

The registered manager maintains strong oversight of the home. Some incidents have occurred when children were not staying at the home. The registered manager has nevertheless been pivotal in ensuring that children have appropriate support with communication, and she challenges other agencies if this does not happen. The manager writes safety plans and refers children to services for additional support. She works

diligently and thoroughly, engaging others effectively and advocating strongly for children.

There have been no changes in the experienced staff team since the last inspection. One member of staff has retired but continues to provide occasional cover. This consistency enables children to maintain trusting relationships. All staff show genuine care and affection to the children, and this has helped to create the strong family feel in the home.

Staff value their regular team meetings. Continuous research is disseminated to the team, and all staff have opportunities to research themes identified in discussion with the manager. The themes focus on the needs that children have and issues that affect deaf children and their lives. The manager is creative in organising learning, which keeps the team informed, reflective and aware of good practices.

Staff are skilled and knowledgeable about the diverse needs of the children. Staff receive specialist training, which gives them confidence in their roles. They respond confidently to children's needs. When a new or emerging need is identified for a child, the manager sources appropriate staff training. Staff have recently undertaken learning in mental health awareness to better support children's emotional wellbeing. This ensures that staff are well prepared, well informed, and able to deliver safe, responsive and high-quality care.

Staff benefit from regular, well-structured supervision sessions and annual appraisals that support their professional development effectively. These sessions are individualised, offering meaningful opportunities for reflection on practice. Staff report feeling extremely well supported, with leaders demonstrating genuine consideration for their wellbeing. This promotes a positive culture in which staff feel valued, motivated and confident.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC035241

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Doncaster Deaf Trust

Registered provider address: Doncaster College for the Deaf, Leger Way, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN2 6AY

Responsible individual: Alexis Johnson

Registered manager: Catherine Warner

Inspectors

Carol Jagger, Social Care Inspector
Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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