

# 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 is registered to provide care for up to nine children who have sensory impairment. The home operates as one home but with two accommodation provisions. Six children can live in Dickson House and three children in the North Flat. The staff at the home provide planned care on a 52-week basis, 38-week educational residential placements and respite care for children who attend the trust's school.

The registered manager registered with Ofsted in February 2012.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

The home received a monitoring visit in September 2020. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

### Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

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:** 12 February 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 12/02/2019      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 06/02/2018      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 01/02/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 21/06/2016      | Full            | Outstanding             |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Currently, there are seven children living at the home. The staff provide a high level of supervision for the children, tailored to their needs. The children were consulted during this inspection.

The manager and the staff know the children exceptionally well. The children have formed strong attachments with the staff who have become an important part of their lives. Staff encourage the children to be aspirational for their futures by seeking new opportunities and experiences.

The manager promotes a diverse and inclusive environment. Children are fully respected. Staff are sensitive and responsive to the children's identities, encouraging them to express their individuality. Staff support the children to learn the etiquette of the deaf and the hearing communities. They instil British values in the children's everyday life. Children are actively encouraged to develop safe and positive friendships with their peers. They also attend local groups specific to their interests and identity.

Children are supported by staff who come from a similar background and have a great insight into the children's needs and their struggles within the mainstream community. Staff help children to embrace and celebrate deaf culture and identity. The children are proud to be deaf and have high self-esteem.

The manager and the staff make sure that the children's experience of moving into the home is positive. Staff help the children to make choices about living in this home and their views are carefully listened to. Managers have created a respectful environment for children and staff where everyone feels highly valued. As a result, the children feel appreciated and respond positively to staff.

All the children attend school within the trust and have fantastic school attendance. There is excellent communication between the school and the staff. Staff provide effective routines for the children and build therapeutic support into their timetables to meet their complex needs. Children's achievements are frequently recognised, rewarded and celebrated. The children are consistently making exceptional progress from their respective starting point.

Staff continue to develop very good working relationships with families and professionals. Staff actively support the children to keep in touch with their families and other people who are important to them. A summary of the children's progress is shared with families on a weekly basis. This keeps parents fully informed and helps them to support their children's development when the children are at home.

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

Children's risk assessments are detailed and individualised. These assessments provide staff with clear behaviour management strategies. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home. However, staff are aware of what to do should this occur. Staff help the children to show respect and kindness to each other. The children have built positive relationships with each other and the staff.

The manager and the staff have an in-depth understanding of the risks for the children. They work in accordance with agreed strategies to minimise risks and maintain children's safety. There have been some incidents where children have behaved negatively towards each other. The manager responds promptly to such incidents and takes measures to address them, which include direct work with children, additional staff training and the involvement of external agencies, where appropriate.

The stability of the staff team is a major contributing factor to achieving positive outcomes for the children. The staff know each other's strengths and together they prioritise the needs of the children. This has enhanced the children's life chances significantly.

Staff implement behaviour management strategies effectively. Staff use de-escalation techniques effectively and they use the home's proactive positive approach to engage the children. This helps the children to understand and to manage their behaviours and emotions more appropriately. The children rarely receive sanctions; when they did, the sanctions were proportionate and necessary.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The registered manager is child-focused and encourages her staff to achieve consistently excellent outcomes for the children. She is particularly experienced and creative when seeking out opportunities for children to enjoy productive lives. The manager and children enjoy a warm and close relationship.

The staff team is highly qualified. All staff hold qualifications in British sign language. They support the children to practise their learning from school in the home. This has helped tremendously with the children's language development.

Staff receive regular reflective supervision from the management team. Staff feel well supported by the manager and regard her as a positive role model. They are enthusiastic about their roles and provide a positive atmosphere for the children to live in.

The manager values continued professional development. She ensures that her staff team receives up-to-date training, including courses that are specific to children's needs and creates opportunities to aid additional learning. Monthly training topics

are identified at the beginning of each academic year. This approach ensures that staff are equipped with knowledge and skills to provide better care for the children.

The manager's review of the quality-of-care report provides a thorough account of the progress the children have made. The manager seeks regular feedback from the children and staff about their experiences of the home. She is determined in removing language barriers for parents and supports them to fully take part in their children's care. In addition to this, the manager completes a six-weekly audit of records to ensure that there is excellent management oversight and actions taken to address any shortfalls identified quickly.

The staff team faced significant challenges brought about by COVID-19. Highly effective emergency plans were implemented, which included the staff working in bubbles with the children in the home during the national lockdown. Staffing levels are high, and this means there are always sufficient staff to cover staff absences. Agency staff are rarely used. This demonstrates commitment to the children and means that the children receive consistent care.

## **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:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** Doncaster Deaf Trust

**Responsible individual:** Alexis Johnson

**Registered manager:** Catherine Warner

## Inspector

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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