

SC057703

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is a privately operated children's home. The home provides care and accommodation for up to two children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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: 23 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The young people receive exceptionally high-quality care from a diverse and

experienced staff team, underpinned by strong leadership and managerial oversight.

- The home radiates warmth and the young people experience a culture of openness where they have the opportunity to build trusted and secure relationships.
- The young people make measurable and sustained progress in all aspects of their development, relative to their starting points.
- The young people's complex behaviours are clearly understood by the adults who are looking after them. Effective and well-established relationships with professionals ensure that there is a coordinated response in the management of risk.
- The manager and staff do not give up on the young people. They place the well-being of young people at the centre of their practice.
- Planning for the young people transitioning in or out of the home is undertaken both sensitively and thoroughly. High priority is given to ensuring that beginnings and endings are positive. Irrespective of the circumstances, the young people are given a fresh start.
- Staff are exposed to a wealth of training and career enhancement opportunities in a company that acknowledges the correlation between a skilled and experienced staff team and achieving good outcomes for the young people in their care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
31/01/2017	Full	Outstanding
29/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/08/2015	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The young people living at the home have received continuity of care from a well-established, highly skilled and diverse staff team that has enabled them to build purposeful, trusting and secure relationships. Young people are listened to. The staff clearly know the young people well and help them make appropriate choices; they experience an immediate sense of belonging. One young person said: 'Staff have really listened to me. They already know what I am interested in and I have only just arrived!'

The young people benefit from planned admissions into the home. Assessing new referrals alongside careful and sensitive planning is highly regarded as a key component in ensuring that there is a smooth transition into the home. Risks are fully understood and plans are immediately formulated in consultation with the young person and their social worker. The social worker commented: 'The staff were very welcoming, the atmosphere was warm and relaxed and arrangements for [Name's] admission was done at his pace. I was really impressed.'

The manager and the staff team do not give up on young people; they help them and support them to fulfil their potential. The journey for one young person, relative to his starting point, has seen a sustained and significant improvement in many aspects of his life. Prior to admission, the young person was a prolific non-attender in education. Through persistent and collaborative working practices with the virtual school service and the home's in-house provision, the young person re-engaged in education and successfully completed his GCSE examinations in mathematics and English. 'Going to college is a real possibility,' he said when discussing options with his key worker. This has been a remarkable transformation with the young person commenting that his success had 'really boosted my confidence'.

Young people, despite their complex lives and trauma they have experienced, are given extensive support in reconnecting with their families. Staff have gone that extra mile in re-establishing one young person's contact with his parents and have given parenting advice and guidance in managing behaviours. As one member of staff commented: 'Seeing the relationship develop between [Name] and his parents over the last few months makes this job worthwhile. We will still be here if it breaks down to pick up the pieces.'

The young people that have moved on to semi-supported accommodation have been fully supported. Highly thought-out plans, ongoing outreach support alongside exceptionally close working relationships with leaving care services have ensured that one young person received a successful and smooth transition. The young people remain in touch and staff continue to offer advice and guidance as they progress into adulthood. A social worker stated: '[Name] had a really positive time at [care home] and made some tremendous progress in all aspects of his life.'

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

The manager and staff team go above and beyond in ensuring that the young people in their care feel safe and stay safe. The management of risk is highly individualised, underpinned by robust and regularly reviewed risk assessments that have ensured that the young people experience a proactive and well-coordinated response to their risk-taking behaviours. Staff have worked diligently, using a range of creative strategies in their attempts to engage one young person in reflecting on their current behaviours. A member of staff said: 'Acting as a responsible adult really broke the ice.' Upon release from custody, the young person demonstrated remorse and for a period really engaged in reparation work that resulted in a significant reduction in criminal activities.

The ultimate decision to give notice on the placement was made with the acknowledgement that it was in the best interests of the young person. Testament to the work undertaken, the social worker commented: 'I have nothing but admiration for the efforts staff at the home went to in trying to stabilise [Name]. We reached a point where we exhausted all options in keeping him safe.'

For one young person, their risk-taking behaviours significantly reduced, both in and outside the home. Episodes of going missing from care and behaviour in the home improved and the young person began to engage in developing their independence skills. This excellent outcome is clearly linked to staff diligence and innovative practice. Staff consistently check where the young people are, who they are with, and remain in touch with them to ensure that they are safe. On many occasions, staff have searched the local community and knocked on doors of known associates in their efforts to locate one young person. The missing person police liaison officer said: 'The staff at [care home] are really approachable and I enjoy visiting. Staff go above and beyond in ensuring that young people are safe and always follow the protocols.'

Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are robust and regularly reviewed. The young people are consulted with and have input in developing their plans. This helps them to understand why certain measures are put in place. Staff understand the additional vulnerabilities of young people in care when using social media and the internet. This understanding is balanced against the importance of helping the young person to use social media in a safe way. As part of one young person's reintroduction to education, staff have facilitated online learning on issues such as grooming and cyber bullying. Professional feedback from online survey reports indicated: 'The home is doing everything possible to safeguard and engage the young people who are currently in placement.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly experienced and suitably qualified, holding a level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She has excellent leadership qualities and has a clear understanding of what the home does well. Her commitment and dedication in improving the quality of care and outcomes for young people are exceptional. All the young people placed at the home, since the last inspection, have experienced a number

of placement breakdowns. The manager and staff have been instrumental in stabilising the young people through consistency of care in a highly nurturing environment.

The manager has developed robust auditing systems to ensure the delivery of consistently high-quality care. Care planning documentation is regularly reviewed and young people's progress is monitored through staff supervisions and monthly team meetings. High emphasis is placed on the feedback from stakeholders, professionals, families and the young people on how practice is delivered to achieve optimum outcomes for the young people. The home fully meets the objectives as outlined in its statement of purpose.

The manager has high expectations for the staff and has clear oversight of their practice in the delivery of individualised and innovative care. For one young person, who has unique entrepreneurial skills, the manager and her staff team have put forward an educational programme that will capitalise on these skills and that will potentially re-engage the young person in education. The staff team is diverse and possesses a range of qualities that are child-centred and focused. Together, the staff strive to help the young people make positive changes and enable them to reach their full potential. The manager said: '[Name] is amazing with the young people, very straight-talking and has real insight. She puts the young people first and looks beyond presenting behaviours. I wish I could bottle her approach with the young people.'

The manager is, without question, clear on her roles and responsibilities in respect of the young people in her care and her staff. Both staff and the manager advocate on behalf of the young people and ensure that all relevant individuals are kept informed of any serious events. Consultation and regular communication take place with all professionals, family members and relevant organisations in relation to the health and well-being of the young people. The manager is proactive in arranging strategy meetings to ensure that collective decisions and actions are made following significant safeguarding concerns. The manager is confident in her ability to challenge the local authority if she feels that decisions made are not in the best interests of the young people in her care.

The staff team is exposed to a wide range of training opportunities and the manager puts great emphasis on continuous professional development. Two members of staff are undergoing career progression and the company places great emphasis on professional development and staff well-being. A member of staff commented: 'I am more confident in the manager role and more familiar with the roles and responsibilities. I now have responsibility for supporting staff and ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. I include all staff and delegate tasks to aid their professional development.' Retention of staff is highly valued and has afforded continuity of care for the young people.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children

and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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: SC057703

Provision sub-type: 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: Angela Tetley

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, social care inspector

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