

SC355755

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to two children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered at this home since July 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2019	Full	Good
23/10/2018	Full	Good
13/06/2017	Full	Good
06/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children form really meaningful relationships with staff. One child told the inspector, 'Staff are the best thing about living here.' The attachments that they develop with the adults who care for them have contributed to helping children feel safe and secure living at the home.

Children make good progress. One child who has moved on from the home was helped to improve her family relations, as well as achieve some functional skills qualifications in education. In addition, staff helped the child to explore her career prospects, which enabled her to focus on her future aspirations.

Children are healthy and attend routine and urgent health appointments. One child has developed some self-care skills and is becoming more independent, such as in personal care. Children receive consistent responses and praise from the staff team, which helps ensure that their physical and emotional health needs are met.

Education is a priority for staff. The strength of their relationships with schoolteachers has supported one child to sustain her high level of school attendance. The continuity of care provided by the staff and the teachers has helped educational progress to be maintained.

Staff ensure that children can experience their favourite things. They provide them with ample opportunities to have fun inside and outside the home. This includes going for walks at the seaside and visiting the zoo to see their favourite animals. The staff's ambition to make a difference to the children's lives is helping to create positive and lasting memories.

Children influence the care they receive in the home. Staff focus on the children's individual needs and the matters that are important to them. For example, staff sensitively planned out what needed to be in place to enable a child to meet with a friend outside school. This helps children to develop a sense of self-worth.

The home is well decorated and is clean throughout. Staff have created a comfortable space for children to live in. Children's bedrooms are personalised and have soft furnishings to help make it feel cosy. However, the outside of the property needs some attention. The garden looks unkempt and does not enhance the living experience of the children.

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

Children are better protected because of living at this home. For some children, incidents of going missing from care, inappropriate sexualised behaviour and emotional dysregulation have reduced. Staff recognise the children's signs of emotional distress, which helps to improve their outcomes.

Children are being helped to understand their thoughts and feelings. Staff enable children to explore why stressful situations occur. When children have needed mental health intervention, medical assistance and specialist help have been on hand. This approach is helping children to become more self-aware and have a more positive outlook.

Children talk things through with the adults who care for them. They also have in place self-soothe boxes to help find alternatives to self-injurious behaviours. Children are receiving the help they need to cope with difficult emotions.

Children have in place individualised risk assessments in relation to their needs. The risk assessments are detailed and provide staff with direction about how to keep children safe. This helps to ensure that staff have up-to-date strategies to follow to reduce the risk of harm for children.

Staff provide consistent routines and clear boundaries, which helps children understand the expectations for their behaviour. The positive relationships children have with staff enable them to respond to the routines in place.

Managers take swift action when concerns are raised about the practice of staff. However, a recent incident was not managed in line with the local safeguarding procedures. The management team investigated and concluded independently an allegation against a staff member. Managers did not escalate their concerns without delay when they could not contact the local authority designated safeguarding lead. Not following local safeguarding procedures could result in children being at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is actively involved in the running of the home and knows the progress that the children make. She is committed to ensuring that children have the best experience and opportunities while living at the home.

The manager has created a supportive environment for staff to learn the skills needed to care for the children. Staff receive regular supervision that is child focused. One staff member said, 'The manager is always here. You can speak with her about anything.' Staff also have in place consultation sessions with a therapeutic service. These sessions enable the staff to reflect on their own practice and improve the quality of care they provide to the children.

The provider's training hub offers a wide variety of learning opportunities for staff. However, staff have not completed some training relevant to the specific needs of the children living at the home. Not doing so limits their knowledge and skills and could result in children's needs not being fully met.

The care and support the staff provide are highly valued by other professionals. One child's social worker said, 'The manager and staff are making a positive difference to [Name of child's] life'.

Children's case records are well organised and are completed to a high standard. The 'focus work' and 'daily record' sessions provide children with a reflective account of their achievements. The style and clarity of recordings mean that children have an increased understanding about their time living in the home.

The manager has failed to notify Ofsted about a serious event. Also, information in a prior notification submitted to Ofsted lacked sufficient detail. This does not enable the regulator to review and evaluate serious events effectively.

Interview notes completed by recruiting managers do not show how the knowledge and skills of candidates are competently assessed. This does not provide the regulator with assurance that the recruitment of staff is supported by a robust interview process.

All newly appointed staff have in place a probationary period. Training and support are provided in the first four weeks as part of the induction plan. However, records do not provide evidence of how the manager assesses a staff member's performance throughout the rest of their probationary period. It is unclear whether staff are making sufficient progress in their roles.

Monitoring and review systems are in place, and the voice of the children is especially strong. The review about the quality of care would be more informative if the views of those in contact with the home were regularly sought. Without this feedback, the development of the home and the quality of care provided to children may be limited.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that allegations against staff members are managed in line with local safeguarding procedures. Allegations should be managed in a coordinated manner with the local authority designated officer.	10 June 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(c)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff members have completed training relevant to the children's needs prior to admission, or as soon as possible once a child has started to live at the home.	10 June 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; A notification made under this regulation—	10 June 2021

must include details of— the matter; any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; (Regulation 40 (4)(c) (5)(a)(i)(iii)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure they notify Ofsted about an allegation made against a staff member working at the home. The registered manager must also ensure that notifications have the required information relevant to any serious event that occurs.	
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Recommendations

- 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. In particular, the registered manager should ensure that the garden is free from unsafe furniture and kept to a standard that enhances the living experience of the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of the information from internal monitoring (under Regulation 45) to ensure continuous improvement. In particular, the registered manager should ensure that they gather the views of parents, social workers, and health and education professionals and any other people significant in the children's lives. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- As set out in Regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They should ensure that the recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. In particular, the registered provider should ensure that interview notes for applicants provide robust evidence of the interview panel's evaluation of why applicants are suitable for appointment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- All staff should have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once a year. In particular, the registered manager should ensure that staff members who are working through their probationary period have their performance reviewed in line with the expectations and standards set out in the staff member's job description for their role. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC355755

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Registered provider address: 170 Southgate, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 1QJ

Responsible individual: Leanne Smith

Registered manager: Vicky Cawthorne

Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

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