

SC471178

Registered provider: Dove Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately operated and can accommodate up to four children or young people of either gender who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There is also a small, separate building utilised as a semi-independence training flat for an additional young person. The home can accommodate children of any age. However, normally they are between 12 and 18 years old.

The manager was registered in August 2019 and holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 4 and 6 November 2019

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	good
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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: 11 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
14/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/01/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home's statement of purpose reflects the ethos of the home, which has a warm and welcoming atmosphere where young people feel a true sense of belonging. One young person has lived at the home since 2014 and has made immeasurable progress. Another young person said: 'I give the staff grief, but this is the best home I have lived in.' This is because young people receive exceptional individualised care from the manager and the staff team.

The young people living at this home have overcome many challenges. The diligence and determination of the staff team has seen the young people believe in themselves and have confidence and pride in their achievements. As one staff member said: 'Finding ways of getting the young people back into education has had its challenges, but the rewards have been worthwhile.' All the young people have qualifications that would have been unheard of 12 months ago. Staff effectively unpick the barriers to education for young people. One young person has achieved good GCSE grades as a result of a well-cultivated learning environment.

In all aspects of their lives, and despite their complex needs, young people have made progress relative to their time in placement. Partnership working is such a key strength that it almost becomes impossible for young people to 'slip through the net'. Young people have the individualised care and support that they need to move on with their lives.

For one young person, working towards independence has been a life-changing experience. Collaborative working has helped the young person overcome his social inhibitions and he is now ready to live independently. Professionals have been astounded by his achievements, stating that staff have 'sown the seed' and given the young person 'unwavering support'. The young person is now able to cook healthy meals, budget, carry out internet banking and is emotionally and socially ready to move on.

The manager and her deputy have used creative and well-researched guidance to inform their practice in meeting the complex needs of the young people. This has included attending a spray paint workshop with information on creative recovery, research into the use of Thai Chi in helping to improve sleep and anxiety, and how eating together is linked to positive mental health. These different approaches have helped one young person redirect his anger, to request help and engage in targeted youth support.

A key strength of the home is the ability of staff to begin the journey of facilitating, supporting and repairing relationships with parents and extended family, even when relationships appear to have irrevocably broken down. One young person, who felt totally rejected by her family, has now successfully had her first overnight contact. A parent stated: 'Staff have been brilliant. They have helped to rebuild our relationship and we are in a much better place.'

Disaffected young people are given hope as a result of the positive relationships they have built with staff and each other. They now have ambition and aspirations for the future. Young people are supported well to make their views known and grow in self-

confidence as a result.

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

Two of the young people have complex needs and are vulnerable to sexual and criminal exploitation. The manager and staff are very mindful of the risks associated with each young person which are well documented in their risk assessments and behaviour management plans. This ensures a rigorous and consistent response to all forms of risk-taking behaviour.

The frequency of young people who go missing from the home has fluctuated since the last inspection. For one young person, there has been a significant decline in comparison to previous placements. Highly effective planning and practice has seen improvements in the safety of the young people. This is because the manager and staff really care about the young people and want to keep them safe. A police officer who visits the home every week said: 'What is most impressive is the effort made by staff to locate the young people. Staff on occasions spend several hours a day searching, though this is rare.'

The children and young people receive a lot of input from the staff to help them develop their own sense of safety and to regulate their emotions more effectively. A great deal of work is carried out in relation to keeping safe online. Appropriate phone usage is a key factor in keeping young people safe from individuals who want to exploit them.

The manager and staff have acquired a wealth of knowledge on the risks posed by all forms of exploitation and self-harm. The close relationships with the police, social workers, mental health professionals and parents help to minimise risk when the young people have gone missing. Equally, staff get to know the areas where the young people frequent, they follow them when they go missing and make regular welfare checks when they are having free time. Young people's free time is managed and supervised very well so that they remain safe.

The staff team uses a restorative approach to behaviour management. The need for physical intervention is very rare because the staff have a clear understanding of the triggers for negative behaviours. They know the young people very well and understand their history. Equally, staff are able to predict behaviours and often pre-empt a change in mood, then take steps to minimise incidents of, for example, self-harm. As one young person said: 'Staff keep you safe when you feel down and really upset. I can go speak to anyone.'

Safe recruitment practices are in place and the home does not use agency staff. The employment of staff is thorough and robust. Vetting procedures ensure that individuals are employed who possess qualities, skills and experience that will enhance the lives of the young people and improve outcomes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly motivated and dedicated to her role. The deputy manager is supportive of the manager and they complement each other. Both are very self-driven and have worked for the company for over six years. They are held in high regard by stakeholders, commissioners and all professionals involved in the safety and

well-being of young people. Feedback received describes the home as 'one of the best' and 'positively caring'.

The manager has effective systems in place to ensure that the young people receive high-quality and safe care. The development of the home and the staff is given priority and staff have responsibilities that enhance their role, skills and experience. Staff receive regular supervision that has a strong focus on staff development. This has enabled the staff to deliver consistently high-quality care.

The manager is passionate about the lives and outcomes for the young people. This is evident through her persistent challenge when advocating on behalf of the young people in her care. Through strategy discussions, children looked after reviews and daily communication, young people are safeguarded. Professionals regularly 'drop in' and become part of the life of the home. The young people are able to develop trust in the adults who look after them.

Staff retention is good and new staff experience a well-coordinated induction and probationary period. Continuous professional development is encouraged. The home's development plan reflects the skills and experience of the staff, their strengths and areas of development. Young people are encouraged to participate in day-to-day decisions about their lives and in maintaining the home environment.

Case records are not only meaningful, but they have a purpose and reflect the work undertaken with the young people. Focused work and key-working sessions with the young people provide the catalyst for change. The voice of young people and the thoughts about their care are clearly recorded and they have better outcomes as a result.

The manager's hands-on approach ensures that she is well informed about everything that is happening at the home. The staff and the young people feel well supported. Relationships with other professionals are excellent and she ensures that there is a genuine team-around-the-child approach.

The home is suitably located and in easy reach of the local resources available to the young people. The young people have access to a range of activities that promote learning and engagement. The young people have gone on holiday together, attended residential training programmes and enjoyed day trips to Alton Towers. The manager and deputy use research to inform practice and have been innovative in promoting educational opportunities that have given the young people qualifications, such as online learning.

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: SC471178

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: Jill Firth

Inspector

Cath Sikakana: social care inspector

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