

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	28/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC471178
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	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	Stacy Cooper
Inspector	Jennifer Fenlon

Inspection date	28/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. Young people are making continuous progress and gaining positive experiences. Staff are fully aware of the progress that the young people have made and, importantly, when they continue to require further support and nurture. Staff encourage young people to celebrate their progress and experiences. Staff capture these experiences in young people's individual journey files. Examples include attending a trampolining fitness class, enjoying a break to Blackpool, going to a football match, having drumming lessons and, for one young person, having their first piano lesson. A professional reported: 'The home is a fantastic resource for children. Staff are so welcoming and friendly, and it is little wonder that the children are able to work towards achieving their full potential.' Young people continue to experience security and stability in the home. This is supported by the manager ensuring a thorough admissions process, with clear consideration about the impact of any new admission on the young people. In addition, the manager consults with a psychotherapist to thoroughly consider all the therapeutic needs of children and young people before any referrals are accepted. There have been no admissions of children and young people into the home since the last inspection. Staff consistently encourage, advocate and support young people in education to enable them to achieve and reach their full potential and aspirations. One young person regularly achieves 100% attendance, which is having a positive impact on his attainment. Another young person now has a clear plan to complete her GCSEs and is taking steps to prepare for further education. Young people are encouraged by staff to form friendship groups. One young person's friendships have significantly developed. He is now going to school at lunchtime to spend time with his peers and to play football. Another young person has enjoyed meeting her friend for a coffee, demonstrating that she can participate in age-appropriate behaviours when out with her peers. Young people are benefiting from improved family relationships. Staff work closely with carers and family members to facilitate good contact arrangements. As a result, one young person has enjoyed increased contact with her brothers and sisters and has seen her grandparent.	

Young people are kept safe by a staff team that understands their needs and can manage their complex behaviours. As a result, there have been minimal episodes of young people going missing, and the staff have not needed to use physical restraint. When young people are missing, staff take appropriate steps and are quick to respond to actively protect them and ensure their safe return. A police officer complimented staff by saying: 'It is refreshing to see that a children's home takes positive action to locate a missing person, as normally places do not bother.' However, some documents were found not to clearly identify that all young people had been consulted about consequences for their behaviours. Additionally, the same documents did not consistently evidence the manager's oversight.

Young people have opportunities to develop their independence skills. They are encouraged to take responsibility for domestic tasks and build on other areas that are pertinent to their development. For example, one young person is guided by staff to do his own washing and to clear up after dinner. Young people have time to develop their skills, as there are currently no plans for them to move on from the home.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff and care practices that embrace the home's ethos. Staff celebrate the strengths of the young people, and these are routinely discussed and captured through 'key achievements'. In addition, the manager mirrors this practice to identify and celebrate the wealth of knowledge, skills and qualities within the staff team. The manager utilises the strengths of the staff team to benefit the home and care afforded to the young people.

Partnership working has a positive impact on recognising the needs and developing plans for the young people. The manager identifies and actively challenges when agencies' responses are impacting negatively on the young people. Staff support young people to develop relationships with relevant professionals. For example, one young person went for a coffee with her leaving care worker. In addition, the manager is building links with other agencies, the support of which may be required for children and young people admitted to the home in the future.

The manager is forward thinking and continues to explore ways to develop staff practices and to improve the care given to the young people. She has implemented additional training for the staff team on drug awareness, child protection and cognitive behavioural therapy. In addition, she successfully planned the introduction of new staff members to the home, to ensure that their presence did not impact negatively on the young people.

The manager has built on the strengths from the last inspection and has addressed the requirement and recommendation set. She has also improved systems to address the deficits that were highlighted. However, this inspection identified further recommendations for the manager to address. These are to clearly identify in recordings that all young people have been consulted about consequences for their behaviours, and that the same documents consistently evidence the manager's oversight. These recommendations were resolved during the inspection.

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/01/2017	Full	Outstanding
26/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/11/2015	Full	Outstanding
10/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Children should be actively encouraged to read their records and add further information to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6)

This is with particular reference to there being clear consultation with children and young people in relation to sanctions given and the recorded evidence of their comments and signatures, inclusive of the records that reflect whether they have refused.

- The registered person should make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvements. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

This is with particular reference to the manager ensuring that all documents have management oversight and are confirmed by managers' signatures, and that these directly link to the incident and sanction book.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection, we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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