

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, providing accommodation for up to six children in one provision and three children in the other.

The home provides planned care on a 52-week basis, 38-week educational residential placements and short-breaks care for children who attend the trust's school.

This registered children's home is part of a specialist school that provides education on-site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school. At the time of the inspection, there were seven children living at the home. All of the children's care was planned over a 38-week, term-time educational residential placement.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2012 and is suitably experienced and qualified for this role.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 December 2024

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	outstanding
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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: 23 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/01/2024	Full	Outstanding
22/11/2022	Full	Outstanding
23/11/2021	Full	Outstanding
12/02/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

All seven children shared their views and spent time with inspectors during the visit.

Families trust the manager and the staff and recognise the difference that living in the home makes to children's lives. The manager ensures that children speak to their families daily if they want to. Consistent working between school staff and families ensures that children receive consistent care and support, and parents say they would not change anything.

Children living here feel accepted and safe, make progress and have lots of fun. This home is a unique and extremely special place for children to live or stay. There is a strong sense of community here. Staff say they feel proud to work here. Children feel accepted and safe in the home; their health needs are well met, and this provides a firm foundation for them to flourish. Children grow in confidence, skills and knowledge, and living here changes their lives for the better.

Children living in this home come from a range of diverse backgrounds, and some have learned to sign in a unique way that reflects the language spoken in their homes. The exceptionally committed manager and staff help children to communicate with each other and to build great friendships. Two of the children now meet up during school holidays, and this reduces their sense of isolation.

All the children who live in the home make great progress. This includes children who have struggled with their condition, have disengaged from school, have felt isolated and have not accepted support around their sensory needs. These children are now making friendships, have an extremely active social life, are communicating with family members and are excited to go to school. One parent said that their child is 'living their best life'.

Children are exceptionally well cared for. Living at this home and attending the on-site school are making a significant difference to their lives. This is recognised by the children's parents and the children themselves. This is because children have trust and confidence in the adults who care for them. Children are guided on their journey from when they arrive to when they leave as young adults. The self-belief children develop nurtures their confidence and sense of identity. Children thrive because of the opportunity to identify with other deaf people as role models and the collective high levels of nurture from the whole staff team.

Support is individualised, and staff help children to engage in activities that interest them while exploring new experiences. Children are now aspirational for their future. The older children have confidence to speak for themselves regarding decisions

about their future. For example, one child has made their own decision about which college they want to attend. Another wants to train to be an electrician.

Families place their trust in the manager and staff. They are supported by great communication from the home. Staff provide weekly reports but also support video calls using families' preferred method of communication. The wealth of photos and pictorial reports children go home with demonstrate their progress and experiences and enhance their memories. They also support children to talk about their experiences using their improved communication skills when they go home to family.

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

Children have detailed plans which address the unique risks that they face, particularly in the community. The plans are specific to each child's needs and are co-produced with input from the children. Direct work supports children's understanding of the risks, and their targets are achievable. Progressive small steps support big wins that help to build the children's confidence and self-esteem. Their plans and targets are understood clearly by both school and home staff, and they receive consistent support to achieve their goals.

Children do not go missing from the home. Despite this, the manager has linked with local services to ensure that risks in the area are identified and understood clearly. Children's individualised plans are kept under review. Frequent conversations about keeping safe online and in the community help to improve the children's sense of danger. Children's safety is enhanced by this clear understanding of risk.

A gradual reduction of support enables children to become increasingly independent in the community as they gain new skills and get older. They learn how to communicate their needs to others and keep themselves safe.

When children are upset, staff provide nurture and comfort to them. They set clear, consistent boundaries and house rules which the children understand. Staff also work hard to ensure that children understand the reasons behind the rules. Children learn about equality and respect for others and that everyone's views matter. This shines through at the home.

Children's positive behaviour is recognised, celebrated and rewarded. Children are praised for the positive choices they make, their developing independence and the values which they show. Children respond positively to the encouragement and recognition they receive. Staff do not apply consequences or use any physical holds to manage children's behaviour. This shows in the highly strong relationships children have established with the staff.

All children consistently said how safe they feel in the care of staff. Staff's cohesive practice, exceptional awareness of children's needs and sensitivity to the children's

needs enhance the children's sense of safety, helping to create a home from home for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The long-standing committed and exceptionally well-respected manager has a clear vision and strong oversight of the home. The management team is established and experienced. The manager knows the children individually and has an exceptional understanding of their changing needs. The manager has created a safe environment where the children make positive memories and flourish.

Staff turnover is extremely low as staff feel proud of the difference they make to children's lives and love working at the home. Staff receive unswerving support from managers and others in the team. Staff are supported by a clear and detailed induction and are skilled through formal training and qualifications that are specific to the children's individual needs. These exceed the standards required and equip staff to succeed in their roles and offer consistently high-quality care to each child.

The manager has systems in place to oversee and evaluate the progress of children. Each child has a unique plan relating to their needs. The manager continually makes improvements to ensure that staff understand their roles and what they entail. The recording of children's lives is excellent and worthy of wider dissemination. The clear and informative style of recording enhances the children's ability to look back on their time living at the home.

The manager uses research to raise staff awareness of campaigns for deaf children. She also seeks to develop staff skills and knowledge further by encouraging them to present research to team meetings. In one example, staff shared information about the experience of war in a child's home country. In another example, discussions about a child's health condition have helped the staff to understand how the child might feel and how their condition might affect them. This encourages staff to understand the child's perspective.

The manager challenges other professionals and advocates strongly on behalf of the children. She has escalated concerns when a child shared information about their experiences away from the home, which she felt were not being addressed appropriately by those responsible.

No requirements or recommendations have been made following this inspection.

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: Children's home

Registered provider: Doncaster Deaf Trust

Registered provider address: Doncaster College for the Deaf, Leger Way,
Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN2 6AY

Responsible individual: Alexis Johnson

Registered manager: Catherine Warner

Inspectors

Carol Jagger, Social Care Inspector
Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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