

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 part of a charitable trust. The home is registered to accommodate up to nine children or young people who have a sensory impairment. The home operates as one home but with two accommodation provisions. Six children can live in Dickson House and three children in the North Flat. The home provides planned care on a 52-week basis, 38-week educational residential placements and respite care for children who attend the trust's school. The registered manager is experienced and appropriately qualified. She has been the home's manager since 2011.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 February 2019

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: 6 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2018	Full	Outstanding
01/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
15/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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.

Requirements	Due date
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4.</p> <p>(Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a))</p>	05/04/2019
<p>The registered person must notify, without delay, the local authority for the area in which the children’s home is located of every admission of a child into the home and every discharge of a child from the home.</p> <p>A notification under this regulation must be in writing and must state—</p> <p>the child’s name and date of birth;</p> <p>whether the child is provided with accommodation under section 20 or 21 of the Children Act 1989(a);</p> <p>whether the child is subject to a care or supervision order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989(b);</p> <p>the contact details for—</p> <p>the child’s placing authority; and</p> <p>the independent reviewing officer appointed for the child’s case; and</p> <p>whether the child has an EHC plan or a statement of special educational needs and, if so, details of the local authority with responsibility for the EHC plan or for maintaining the statement of special educational needs.</p> <p>(Regulation 41 (1)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	05/04/2019

Recommendation

- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home’s location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer

to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulations that came in to effect in January and April 2014. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children are gaining positive experiences and sustaining exceptional progress in many areas of their lives. The children expressed positive comments and feelings about the home and their relationships with the staff. Children enjoy a range of social and recreational opportunities and this is all wonderfully evidenced in pictorial weekly reports. For some, this is the first opportunity they have had to enjoy these social experiences.

The staff value communication. The staff are competent in British sign language (BSL) and for some staff members this is their primary means of communication. The children have made substantial improvements in their ability to use BSL. This enables the children to communicate with those around them and helps them to form friendships, thus improving their confidence and self-esteem. Commendably, by employing staff who are deaf, they have a great insight into the children's needs and struggles within what they describe as a 'hearing world'. The staff understand deaf culture and identity, and the children are identifying that they are proud to be deaf. One staff member said, 'It is positive that the children see that people who are deaf have a good job. We can be their role models.'

The children are engaging in full-time education at the trust provision. Together, the staff from the home and the school regularly discuss the children's strengths and developments, and this contributes to their continuous growth. The staff are aspirational for the children and encourage their commitment to school, including supporting them to complete their homework. As the children move on to further education, they are helped to explore alternative provisions, including community college.

The children are prepared for permanent moves out of the home, in line with their placement plan. The manager considers the needs of the children as she routinely reviews the potential impact of children moving in and out of the home. The children's records accurately document information pertinent to them. Although the manager has no register to capture the admissions and discharges at the home, this information is clearly documented in each child's case records. Additionally, the manager has not always provided written notice to the home's local authority for all the children who live or enjoy short breaks. However, this does not affect the children, for they have access to specialist resources through the trust and continuing services from their home authority.

The home is personalised, comfortable and reflects the children's differing needs. The staff encourage the children to share their wishes and feelings about the home. The children's views are highly regarded, and the children were involved in the decision about the design of the lounge. Together, they completed a mood board to express their choices. This matches the current design and decoration.

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

The children receive high levels of care and supervision from the staff in the home and in the community, which unquestionably ensures their safety. With these levels of supervision and effective procedures, the risk of missing from home incidents and exploitation of this vulnerable group is minimised. The children said that they feel safe and secure. This is a result of the warm and trusting relationships they have with the staff. The staff understand the importance of social media, particularly for children who are deaf, as it creates an additional tool for communication with friends and family. To protect the children, the staff have educated them about the dangers of social media and the children can recall what they have learned. The location risk assessment is good at covering the immediate hazards in the home and the school site. The manager is aware of the risks within the wider social area, yet this is not evident in the document. However, given the complexities of the children's needs they do not leave the trust site without staff, and therefore potential risks are managed by the staff.

The children receive consistent care from a highly skilled and stable staff team. The staff manage the children's behaviours effectively and reflect on the measures that work. These are shared with the children's families to promote a continuation of improvements within all environments. As behaviours are proactively managed through de-escalation and positive reinforcement, physical intervention has not been used and sanctions are minimal. After reflection the staff identified that, for one child, sanctions were ineffective, and the staff immediately responded by changing their approach. This child's behaviours are improving by rewarding positivity and providing lots of praise.

The staff are committed to continually updating their knowledge and skills, ensuring that they can optimise the care provided to individual children. The staff regularly complete training which is pertinent to the needs and protection of children. Currently, they are undertaking mental health training. As the staff develop their knowledge and skills, this ensures that the care provided to the children is effective and the children's lives continue to be enhanced. Effective safeguarding procedures and arrangements are implemented, and the staff share relevant concerns to safeguard and protect children. For example, the staff worked with a mother to address the concerns about her son's social media use. This parent reported, 'I am impressed with the staff at the home. When we have issues, we work together to resolve them.'

Medication arrangements are safe and well monitored. Lessons have been learned from previous medication errors. Procedural changes and additional training have strengthened the administration of medication. This means that the children are protected from medication errors and that they receive the medication they need, safely and in a way that improves or maintains their health.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is inspirational and passionate about the home. She is always looking at how to improve the children's lives and their experiences, meaning that the children develop life skills and friendships while living in a home that embraces the deaf culture. This passion is echoed by the staff and, as a team, they ensure that the children's care needs are delivered to the highest of standards. They strive together to help the children make positive, desired changes within their lives and be aspirational. For one child, this includes supporting the exploration of cochlear implants.

The home is achieving its aims and objectives as identified in the statement of purpose. The manager has rigorous auditing procedures to ensure that any areas for development are identified and acted on. The manager knows the strengths of the home and what this means for the children. External monitoring provides an independent overview of the home and the manager responds proactively to any findings. In addition, she has high aspirations for the children, and high expectations of her staff to ensure that the home is always evolving and brings the best standard of care to the children.

The manager is supportive of the members of her staff team and can identify their strengths and areas for support and development. The manager reflects with her team members about their practice, within group meetings and personal supervision. The staff practice is developed through managerial guidance and by attending pertinent training. Staff reported that they feel valued and that the manager has supported them to progress within the role.

Staff have built relationships with professionals and families, and this excellent communication and partnership working enables the needs of children to be resourcefully met. Professionals and families spoke highly of the verbal and written engagement from staff. They reported that the staff are proactive at assisting the relevant agencies to consistently support the children, ensuring that they receive good care and achieve outcomes and progress.

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: SC035241

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Doncaster Deaf Trust

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

Responsible individual: Anne Roberts

Registered manager: Catherine Warner

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, social care inspector

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