

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Unique reference number	1226612
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Harmony Residential Homes Ltd
Registered provider address	Flat 3, Robinson Court, 5 Magdalene Gardens, London N20 0AF

Responsible individual	Sajida Kiyanni
Registered manager	Cindy Burt
Inspector	Trish Palmer

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1226612

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- The staff understand the importance of education and actively encourage and support the children to attend. There is good communication between the staff and education providers.
- A stable, dedicated staff team knows and understands the children well. The staff actively support the children to progress.
- The staff understand the importance of building positive relationships with parents.
- The staff are consistent with boundaries and appropriately challenge any unwanted behaviours.
- The staff actively encourage and support the children to attend activities in the community and to build social skills with their peers.
- The children are consulted regularly with regard to the running of the home. They have input into menu decisions and about any purchases for the home.
- The staff receive a comprehensive induction to the home.
- There are some shortfalls with children not signing paperwork to say they have understood what has been recorded. The children's guide is not child-friendly and does not outline the day-to-day routine of the home. Children do not receive a return to home interview from an independent person after an episode of missing.

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

Statutory requirements

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

Requirement	Due date
<p>14. The care planning standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person is required to:</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure:</p> <p>(f) that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.</p>	<p>28/02/17</p>

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the children are given opportunities to discuss the impact of the care, or any changes they feel they might need to it ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 18, paragraph 3.31). In particular, demonstrate that the children have the opportunity to comment and sign their placement plan.
- Ensure that the children's guide help children understand the day-to-day routines of the home, and what care they can expect to receive while living in the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22).
- Ensure that children's case records are signed and dated by the author of each entry ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3).
- Ensure that the children are actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.6). This is with particular regard to the key work sessions, sanctions and positive behaviour records.

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children up to the age of 18 who present with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
This is the first inspection		

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>This is the first inspection since the home opened in July 2016. The children have begun to build positive relationships with a staff team that knows the importance of supporting them to progress in all aspects of their lives. A child commented that they were happy in the home and that the staff were fun.</p> <p>The children have begun to make good progress living in the home. A social worker commented that one child, 'Has begun to manage his behaviour, and staff have supported him in learning techniques to manage his anger.' An external professional commented that the staff work well with him, the child and his family, they are supportive of the work he is undertaking and communication is good.</p> <p>The staff understand the importance of education and actively encourage and support the children to attend. One child receives education by a tutor in the home. He is due to start with an external education provider in January. The tutor commented, 'He had been out of education for some time before coming to the home, staff have supported him with attending sessions every day, and he is doing well. The staff are very clear about the expectations of the children attending education. They know that if they don't engage then, they will have no activity that evening.' Another child who has a history of absconding attends an external education provider when she is in the home. The headteacher commented, 'We have worked closely with the staff to integrate both children into the school, staff attend all meetings and communication is good. Both children have progressed with their education since being in the home.'</p> <p>The staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the children, the reasons why they are in care and what their current needs are. The staff understand the importance of transitions into the home. A child commented that he came to visit with his mother before moving in and that staff were welcoming.</p> <p>The children have targets, which are regularly reviewed with them by staff. The staff celebrate their achievements in house meetings and through key work sessions. The staff speak with pride at the achievements the children have made since being in the home. This helps to focus and motivate the children to achieve, and reinforces to them that staff are proud of and value their achievements.</p> <p>The children's healthcare needs are promoted. They are registered with the local doctor, dentist and opticians. The staff record appointments with any outcomes and actions. The therapist has regular sessions with the children and meetings with the staff to ensure that there is a consistent approach.</p>	

The staff understand the importance of the children having a variety of activities, both in the home and the community, to help them build self-esteem and social skills with their peers. One child has recently started to attend football training at a local club. The member of staff accompanying him was approached by a Football Association coach asking if he could attend a special training event in January to see if he can play in the local under 19s team. If successful they would put him on a sports and science course in September. The child was excited about this and staff showed him how proud they were of him.

The children attend weekly house meetings. These are of a good quality, and the children are asked if they are happy, feel safe and if there is anything staff can do better to help and support them. These meetings are an opportunity to complete the weekly menu and to request things for the house. The manager writes a comment after each meeting, which is read at the start of the following meeting. This shows that staff listen to and act on the children's wishes and feelings.

The children are supported and encouraged to develop their independence in line with their care plan, age ability and understanding. The children are encouraged to cook, do their laundry and keep their rooms tidy.

The children have individualised placement plans, which support the staff in working with them on all aspects of their daily lives. These are regularly reviewed and updated. However, there is no evidence that the children or the social workers have read and signed to say that they are in agreement with the home's plan. This could lead to children, social workers and staff not working in a consistent way.

There is a children's guide that explains the rules and boundaries and expectations of the home. However, it is not child-friendly and does not contain the day-to-day routine of the home.

The house is in a quiet cul-de-sac. The staff have developed good relationships with immediate neighbours. The home is large, spacious and decorated to a good standard. A child spoken to commented that he likes the house and his room.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The children know how to complain and are asked during house meetings if they have any complaints. There have been no complaints from children since the home opened.	

There were complaints prior to the home opening from neighbours. The manager has worked hard to build relationships with them, and these complaints have now ceased. The manager invited the local county councillor to the home, who was happy with how the home is working with the local residents.

There have been no incidents of bullying since the home opened. Bullying is discussed during the house meetings. The staff challenge unwanted behaviours and reinforce boundaries. The children have individualised behaviour management plans. These incorporate sanctions that the children will receive for unwanted behaviours. The children sign to say that they are in agreement with these. A social worker commented that this helps to reinforce boundaries and expectations of behaviours, as the children understand the consequences in advance. There has been one sanction not included in the child's behaviour plan. This was appropriate and recorded. However, the child has not commented or signed to say he agreed or understood the sanction.

During the inspection, there were observations of good interactions between the staff and a child. Staff used appropriate banter and humour to engage with him. There have been no physical interventions since the home opened. Staff successfully use diversion techniques when the children are angry or upset.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place. They outline risks in the home and the community and the strategies for managing these safety. The staff sign these to say that they have read them and understand the risks involved. The staff understand that it is important for the children to learn and manage risks in consultation with the social worker and in line with their age, understanding and vulnerability.

Health and safety checks are completed and up to date. There is an area risk assessment in place. It outlines risks in the area and actions for reduction. The manager has had input from the police and other local services. This makes the staff aware of potential risks and how these can be reduced to keep the children safe.

Some children do go missing from the home. The manager has good communication with the local missing person's team, and they work closely together to share information. The staff understand the importance of safeguarding the children. They follow the children and contact them on their mobiles. Clear records are kept by staff from the time children go missing until they return. The staff understand the importance of welcoming the children back to the home. They spend time talking with the children to establish where they have been and the risks they place themselves in when they go missing. These are evaluated by the manager to look at any patterns and trends. However, the children do not receive the return to home interviews from an independent person. There is clear evidence that the manager has requested this from social workers and team managers.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2016 when the home opened and has the relevant qualifications and experience to manage the home. The children are central to the home. The manager has a clear vision for the home and is working closely with staff to develop practice.</p> <p>Monthly reports are sent to the social workers. A social worker commented, 'I was receiving monthly reports but due to his complex needs I have asked for these to be weekly, which staff have accommodated. These are good, informative reports which give me good insight into his behaviours and the work being undertaken by the staff.'</p> <p>Recruitment is robust, and all checks are verified before staff can begin working in the home. The manager has extended all the staff's probation, due to children not moving into the home for the first six weeks of opening. This ensures that staff have completed a robust induction. The staff commented that the induction was very good and gave them a good insight into working in the home. Staff meetings are regular. This gives the staff the opportunity to discuss children and any strategies for working with them, as well as care practice and safeguarding. The staff commented that they found these supportive and helpful to working consistently with the children.</p> <p>Medication is appropriately stored and recorded, and a monthly audit is undertaken. All staff have received medication training.</p> <p>The staff have completed all their mandatory training and have, or are registered on, the level 3 national vocational qualification (NVQ). Two of the team leaders have started their NVQ level 5. The staff receive fortnightly supervision and monthly supervision with the home's therapist. Staff commented that they find supervision supportive and it gives them the opportunity to discuss working with the children and their personal development.</p> <p>The manager monitors care practice and the progression of children. Reports from the independent visitor are of good quality and used as part of the monitoring system.</p>	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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