

Rua Kids Childminder Agency

Inspection dates: **9 to 11 August 2022**

Overall inspection judgement **Effective**

Leadership and management Effective

The quality of the agency's services Effective

The impact of the agency's services on the quality of the education and care provided by its childminders Effective

Previous overall inspection judgement **N/A**

Summary findings

Rua Kids Childminder Agency registered in May 2021. The aim of the agency is to 'profoundly improve' the lives of all families by developing and supporting high-quality registered childminders, who the agency refers to as 'early educators'. Equality is central to the agency's mission. It is dedicated to ensuring that no child attending one of its early educator settings is left behind because of potentially limiting circumstances. The agency is led by a strong and collaborative senior leadership and management team which has created an organisational culture where all staff are committed to the same aims.

Since registering with Ofsted, the agency has established a growing early educator workforce in London. It has started to expand into the home counties and its vision is to grow nationally in the future. Central to its growth is a committed responsibility to ensuring that all its early educators across the country receive targeted advice and support.

The agency uses a range of social media platforms to keep in contact with its early educators. In addition, a dedicated online app is being created to improve the experience for early educators and parents. This will include a training and advice and support platform.

The agency provides a robust pre-registration service which includes a secure vetting process, pre-registration training, mandatory safeguarding training and individualised support, advice and training for all applicants. As a result, its early educators understand their responsibilities to meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS). They are clear about the procedures to follow if they are concerned about the welfare of a child in their care.

Annual quality assurance inspections are carried out by a team of knowledgeable assessors who are qualified and experienced in early years. The written reports detailing the inspection findings are available to early educators and parents. Ofsted has reviewed inspection evidence, conducted interviews with assessor staff and, through observations of practice and discussions with early educators, found that inspection judgements are securely aligned with practice.

The agency values the views of its early educators and parents. It regularly gathers feedback from them through early educators' and local community meetings, surveys and keep-in-touch calls. There is a clear complaints policy on the agency's website, which sets out the procedure to follow in the event of any concerns. However, the internal process of logging complaints and recording their resolutions is not yet well established. As a result, there are missed opportunities to ensure that lessons learned from complaints continually influence and improve practice.

The agency has developed good working partnerships with the local authorities where its early educators live. The agency continues to work to strengthen these arrangements, which helps to ensure that early educators can access local training and childcare funding.

Leaders and managers are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities. They have a secure oversight of all safeguarding decisions. The agency liaises well with the local authority designated officer, where necessary. Safeguarding panel meetings are held to scrutinise decisions and assess any matters relating to a potential risk of harm to children. Senior managers have identified the need to make improvements to the makeup of the panel. As a result, steps are being taken to ensure that an additional staff member is appropriately trained to become a panel member. This will help to make sure that there is always a minimum of two panel members and that good levels of challenge and consistency are applied at all times.

The agency uses its enforcement powers appropriately to suspend the registration of early educators where it identifies a potential risk of harm to children. The decision is

made in a timely manner; however, the audit trail of the decision-making lacks some detail. The notice of suspension is not always issued to coincide with the date on which it takes effect. Additionally, information about the right to appeal to the first-tier tribunal is not included in the suspension notice.

Recommendations

- Improve the regulatory procedures with regards to suspension to ensure that notices are issued in a timely manner and that all required information is included in the suspension notice.
- Improve the audit trail for suspension decisions so that it accurately reflects the order of decisions and actions taken.
- Review the handling of complaints to ensure that information gathered during the management and resolution process is clearly noted and used effectively to inform and improve practice.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the childminder agency

- The agency has a strong leadership team. The members of the team hold a shared commitment to deliver a childminder agency which inspires good-quality childcare for children and families who use the service. This commitment drives the practice of highly skilled professionals working in the agency and the early educators who register.
- The agency liaises with other registered childminder agencies (CMAs), Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE) to help raise awareness of the role of CMAs and their contributions to the early years sector.
- The agency has a clear vision and direction for the future. It has a realistic view of its strengths and areas of improvement. This is demonstrated through the priorities the agency has set. For example, the agency's commitment to equality and inclusion is evident in its plans to expand, which is targeted to reach areas of deprivation so that no child is disadvantaged.
- The agency has a strong and knowledgeable team of staff who understand their roles and responsibilities and work collaboratively to provide a seamless and supportive experience for all applicants and early educators. Staff say that they feel valued and able to contribute their ideas and expertise to the growth of the agency. For example, community leads have initiated new ways of keeping in touch with early educators, including a planned annual festival day.
- Senior leaders encourage the staff team to share ideas and contribute to the success of the aims. This helps to ensure that a joined-up approach is offered to early educators and parents. The feedback from both these groups is extremely positive. There is high praise for the timely support and advice that are given. Some early educators say that they would like a named person to contact, although not having this does not detract from the good-quality support which is provided.

- The agency's self-evaluation is effective. It reflects on what works well and what needs to be improved. For example, the agency makes good use of a range of social media resources to keep in touch with the early educators and parents. However, the agency has identified that a dedicated online site will be advantageous and is investing in a new online app which is being designed to replace the current systems used.
- The agency implements a robust recruitment procedure, which ensures that all staff are appropriately vetted and suitable. Good support is provided for the continuous professional development (CPD) of all staff, and effective systems are in place to monitor staff performance. All staff say that they feel valued, and their well-being is thoughtfully supported.
- Those with responsibility for safeguarding have a good knowledge of safeguarding issues and take appropriate actions to manage potential risks of harm to children. However, the recording of actions taken for suspension is not always accurate. Therefore, the audit trail is not always sufficiently reliable.
- There is a complaints procedure in place, which is easily accessible to all those who may need it. The leaders take all concerns seriously and endeavour to resolve them swiftly. However, when information is received, it is not always risk assessed and recorded appropriately to inform the next stages of the agency's decision-making.

The quality of the agency's services

- The agency has a robust registration process. This is tailored to suit the applicant's individual circumstances and helps them to attain the level of knowledge and skills required to become early educators. The agency works in partnership with other organisations which provide some of the online and face-to-face training.
- The agency has a dedicated community team which focuses on providing support for early educators once they are registered. The team is enthusiastic and passionate about its work. This helps the early educators to navigate their path to becoming confident and building links in their community. To assist with this, they run a range of webinars and community face-to-face meetings. These offer good opportunities for early educators to develop their own individual local support networks, which they speak of positively.
- The agency provides comprehensive business support for early educators and parents. For example, the agency manages invoicing, payments and contractual matters. This enables early educators to focus on the care and learning aspects of their provisions.
- The agency employs an experienced team of staff who have defined roles and responsibilities. They offer good levels of support and training to the early educators registered with the agency. Early educators speak highly about the ongoing support they receive.
- The agency's inspection quality assurance process works well. The assessors are knowledgeable about the EYFS and the agency's inspection process. All inspection findings are quality assured by senior managers to ensure that inspection criteria

is carefully adhered to and that judgements align with their guidance. This means that inspection judgements are secure.

- Parents speak positively about the agency. They value that the agency supports the contact between them and their early educator from the initial start-up point and helps to induct and settle new families. Parents say that they are confident to raise concerns with the agency, where appropriate. They feel listened to, and their concerns are acted on swiftly.
- Parents are kept up to date with information about the agency, including any changes to policies, terms and conditions and upcoming inspections. As a result, they have opportunities to express their views to the early educators and the agency.
- The agency's training programmes provide opportunities for early educators to access a wide range of training sessions. These include updates on the EYFS, business management, safeguarding, and learning and development.
- The agency provides good opportunities for early educator assistants to access an extensive range of training to complement their role and responsibilities. This promotes consistency in practice. The agency encourages early educators and their assistants to make good use of local authority training to support their CPD. The dedicated special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides effective guidance and advice to help early educators meet the individual needs of children who may require additional support. The SENCo regularly reviews the impact and effectiveness of their support to ensure that they help children to make progress in their learning and development. Ofsted observed the difference this is making to individual children in the care of early educators.

The impact of the agency's services on the quality of the education and care provided by its childminders

- The agency provides a comprehensive and supportive registration process. Early educators speak extremely highly of the training and support they receive during their registration journey. The training has a strong focus on safeguarding. This ensures that early educators understand their roles and responsibilities and the safeguarding requirements that they must comply with in order to keep children safe.
- The agency's community team works hard to engage all of its early educators. The members of the community team consult with early educators and listen to what they say. For example, quality call checks are generally completed at intervals of three, six and nine months. However, feedback from early educators is that this has felt intensive. As a result, one of the calls has been replaced with a survey. These strategies enable the team to evaluate the effectiveness of the services offered. Some of the feedback also shows that a quality assurance visit at six months would be valued. As a result, steps are being taken to introduce a quality support visit at this stage.
- Most early educators are very positive about the service they receive from the agency. They particularly value the support to access different types of funding,

such as early years pupil premium and tax-free childcare. This helps to ensure that the service is inclusive, and childcare is more accessible to all families.

- Early educators are extremely complimentary of the agency's ongoing support. For example, they say that good training is given, and help and advice are provided throughout the stages of registration. Early educators say that they receive a good response to emails and describe the people who work at the agency as 'amazing'. They comment that everyone is very supportive and helpful. Early educators say that they receive good support setting up. They describe their application adviser as 'friendly and helpful'. An early educator described how they are assigned an adviser in a messaging app group, who is available if they have a problem. They say that if they call the office, someone will get back to them within 24 hours.
- Some early educators also told inspectors that they would like the agency to provide a bit more support with being self-employed and paying their own tax and national insurance. The agency was already aware of this from feedback that it had previously gathered. As a result, it responded by partnering with a tax specialist organisation, which recently provided a well-attended webinar about self-assessment and tax to help early educators to feel more confident about this aspect of their role.
- The early educators work collaboratively with agency staff and parents to ensure that the needs of all children are met effectively. Parents say that their children are excited to attend the settings. Inspectors' observations of practice show that early educators know the children well and that children are happy, confident and settled with them. Children receive a vibrant curriculum to support their individual stages of development, which helps them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Arrangements are in place to support early educators to meet the specific needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The agency works closely with early educators to assist them in devising individualised plans to help them to deliver a carefully planned programme of activities. The support includes face-to-face meetings, advice on strategies, ideas for resources and signposting. The SENCo will also support providers to involve parents and outside agencies when required. The impact of the support provided by the agency is reviewed in a timely way to ensure that it remains appropriate to help children to continue to make progress.
- Training is carefully organised to meet the needs of the early educators in terms of content and accessibility. For example, many early educators have attended training sessions on outdoor play, which were provided by an independent outdoor school. This training is described as 'excellent'. It has been instrumental in helping early educators to provide inspired learning and play activities outdoors. Early educators say that the training has opened up a whole new area of outdoor play for them and the children. They say that it has helped them to extend their knowledge and create exciting learning opportunities for the children.

Childminder Agency details

Unique reference number	CA000045
Local authority	Haringey
Type of provision	Childminder Agency
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Number of active childminders	67
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Previous overall inspection judgement	N/A

Information about this childminding agency

Rua Kids Childminder Agency is part of the Koru Kids organisation. It registered in May 2021. It registers childminders on the Early Years and the Childcare Registers. The agency provides childminders with ongoing training, guidance and business support. It also provides a supportive service to help parents to find childcare to suit their needs and manage the invoicing and payment arrangements. The agency's operational office is based in Shoreditch, London. It currently has 67 registered childminders across London and is branching out into the home counties. The agency employs and contracts an appropriately skilled and experienced team of staff who support applicants through the pre-registration process and throughout their childminding registration.

Information about the inspection

This inspection was conducted by a team of Early Years Senior Officers and Early Years Regulatory Inspectors. To assess the effectiveness of the agency, the inspection team held in-depth discussions with the senior management team, which includes the Nominated Individual and the General Business Manager. They also spoke with team leaders, quality assurance staff, advisers and members of the support team. The inspection team also carried out visits to early educators, observed their practice, observed a training session and spoke with a number of parents. A range of documents were sampled, including the statement of purpose, the agency's self-evaluation document, complaints record, regulatory notices and records, inspection reports and evidence, registration records, recruitment files, and the responses from the childminder pre-inspection survey.

This was the agency's first inspection and was carried out under the Childcare Act 2006, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014.

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