

1274672

Registered provider: Harmony Children's Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately-run children's home provides accommodation for children and young people on a medium- or long-term basis up to the age of 17. The children and young people may have emotional, social and/or behavioural difficulties. The home can also accommodate those who have learning disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders, but the two groups are not accommodated at the same time.

The home aims to be an inclusive environment that focuses on promoting positive behaviour by setting realistic goals and boundaries.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2019 and is working towards her level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

inadequate

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not applicable		
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What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children's home (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and	30/11/2019

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. In particular, ensure that effective monitoring and review systems are in place to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(2))	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child’s learning. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(x)(b))	30/11/2019
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	30/11/2019

registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)(e)) In particular, ensure that thorough risk assessments are in place and kept up to date. Ensure that staff follow the risk assessments consistently and know how to keep the young person safe.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;	30/11/2019

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(ix)(x)(xi))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out	20/12/2019

in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that each child's relevant plans are followed; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs; and that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(iii)(c)(e)(i)(f)) In particular, ensure that all necessary information is obtained prior to placement to determine that the staff can fully meet the needs of the young person. Ensure that relevant plans are followed, and that clear consultation takes place when plans have changed. When the young person may not be suitable for the home, ensure that a review is held to discuss avoiding unplanned endings.	
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected. (Regulation 21(a)) In particular, ensure that that permission is obtained when entering a young person's room to carry out a routine check. Ensure that the permission, including consultation with other professionals, is documented in the child's care plan.	15/11/2019
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. In particular, the procedure must provide that no person who is the subject of a complaint takes any part in its consideration or investigation, except at the informal resolution stage if the registered person considers it appropriate. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any	30/11/2019

complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. The registered person must ensure that no child is subject to any reprisal for making a complaint or representation. The registered person must supply to HMCI, at HMCI's request, a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding twelve months and the action that was taken in response to each complaint. (Regulation 39(1)(2)(3)(4)(5))	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every six months. In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ('the quality of care review report'). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))	30/11/2019

The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).

15/11/2019

When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46(1)(2))

In particular, ensure that risks are clearly identified and actions to reduce risk are in place. The review should also include the risks that relate to approaching and leaving the home, as well as the availability of local transport links.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The young people are supported to see their families in line with their plans, and are kept safe while doing so. The staff team works with the families to build positive relationships. The young people are able to maintain positive relationships and their families support their placements.

The physical health needs of the young people are met. However, there is limited work on maintaining their own health needs, including their emotional well-being, in preparation for moving to independence.

The manager has actively challenged the lack of education for both young people. However, the education being sourced is not in the young person's best interests and puts additional boundaries in place. For example, one young person has been out of education and while he would like to go to mainstream school, it is unlikely to be successful. Alternative options have not been fully explored and work has not been completed to help him understand why other options would be more suitable. This has led to an additional delay in providing him with education.

Informal learning opportunities are not provided, and the structured weeks do not promote a full weekly plan for the young people. One young person's structured week actively supports him having free time on two school days. The lack of education and support means that the young people are not learning, are lacking positive social relationships and are not supported to meet their full potential.

Young people have formed positive relationships with staff and interaction is positive. The young people know how to complain. They are involved in the way the home runs and feel a sense of belonging.

Documents which should give information about why young people have moved out of the home are unclear. Young people have left the home because the staff have been unable to manage behaviours. There are no interim reviews or proactive measures taken in order to work with others to maintain the placement or to give staff the skills to prevent the placement from breaking down. As a result, one of the young people did not have a positive transition out of the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The home provides a welcoming environment for the young people to live in. Any maintenance issues are reported and fixed immediately to maintain the positive environment.

The manager is proactive in requesting meetings with other professionals to work together to protect young people when they have been missing from care. The number of missing-from-home episodes is rising, but the team is working hard to reduce these and is trying to engage one young person with his peers in a safe way. Work is attempted with the young person following episodes of missing from home, to educate him on the dangers and risks.

Staff training has improved and changes to the team appear to have improved the abilities of the staff to support the young people during incidents rather than using the police to manage behaviour. However, the young people currently in placement do not present with the same behaviours, so these abilities have not been fully tested.

The young people have care plans in place. The plans lack detail and strategies for supporting the young people. Risk assessments are not in place for key behaviours. Risk assessments that are in place are unclear and are not updated to describe the current risk. This means that staff do not fully understand which plans to follow and, as a result, the response from staff lacks consistency. The lack of clarity and consistency potentially increases the risks to the young people, and means that the staff are not able to offer them support and reassurance.

Key-work sessions provide support for the young people. However, the sessions are reactive to situations or led by the young people. There is a limited amount of proactive work completed, which means that young people are not fully aware of how to keep themselves safe. They are not given the opportunity to build on proactive strategies to manage their own emotions and therefore incidents continue to occur.

At times, restraints have been necessary to keep the young people safe. Restraints have been carried out by staff who are fully trained. Full debriefs have taken place with the staff team and have been attempted with the young people. This has enabled relationships to be unaffected by the restraints and has helped to build trust between the staff and young people.

Young people are confident about making complaints. However, allegations are not followed up fully and the manager lacks a clear understanding of the process to follow. A lack of recording and reporting has potentially put young people at risk. However, all the staff are clear on the procedures to follow which mitigates the additional risk.

Young people are encouraged to engage with other agencies, such as the police and the youth offending team. The staff team is building up positive relationships with these services to support the young people. However, at times, staff have not followed up the arrangements with definite plans or agreements, which has led to the young people not receiving all of the support they need to learn and develop.

Room checks have been completed at the request of the manager on the basis of ensuring that one young person's room is clean and tidy. However, the social worker and young person have not been consulted and the young person maintains his room to a high standard. No records are in place for room checks. The young person's privacy is not being protected and his bedroom should only be checked with his permission, or when it is necessary in order to keep him safe. Records of searches need to be in place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager maintains a presence in the home, but does not have clear oversight of the issues for the young people or how staff are supporting them. As a result, staff are not consistently following plans and the manager does not address this lack of consistency. For example, staff followed two different plans for supporting a young person when they were missing from home. The manager did know this, but had not addressed it and had not checked that the risk assessment was clear enough to support staff to be consistent. The lack of oversight has also led to agreed actions not been followed up with the police, wasting police time and putting the young person at risk of being criminalised.

Effective monitoring processes are not in place to make sure that documents are up to date and relevant for the young people. This has led to inconsistencies in practice within the staff team. Plans agreed at young people's reviews have not been followed and social workers are not challenged as to why their actions have not been completed. This does not provide the young people with the care they are entitled to.

The manager is unclear about the home's strengths and weaknesses, and does not evaluate and learn from previous experiences. The review of the quality of care report is out of legislative timescales and the provisional document lacks feedback from others and any evaluation. There is no development plan in place for the home, which means progress is limited.

The manager has made the decision to admit a young person without full documentation and an understanding of the young person's history. Although she has asked for the information, she has not continued to challenge the authority for the information, and is unaware of the young person's risks and the support the young person needs. The lack

of information could put the young person and staff at risk. In addition, the manager is not appropriately considering the admission of another young person, or the effect a new young person may have on other young people living in the home.

The manager does not understand when to consult with others and how to fully investigate complaints and allegations. Some of the rationale for decisions is based on staffing needs as opposed to the well-being of the young people which has resulted in poor transitions and lack of full investigation into allegations.

The manager is clearly passionate about the young people receiving the care and support they are entitled to from others, but does not take responsibility for ensuring that they get that care and support. There is a reliance on other agencies to provide care and support rather than the staff team. The manager waits for support to be received or puts plans in place that do not support the overall aims for the young person.

Staff said that they feel supported by the manager and have all had regular supervisions since the home reopened in July 2019. Team meetings do occur, but they focus on the lack of completion of tasks or recording and do not offer opportunities for learning or reviewing the current plans in place for the young people.

Recruitment of staff is well managed, and some lessons have been learned regarding the previous staff team and the need for more experience. The new team is developing and building on the existing skills of the staff, the team is in its infancy and therefore its effectiveness has not yet been fully tested.

The manager lacks knowledge in her own responsibilities and role and has been delayed starting the work for her level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She has also not had experience of working with some agencies before, and has not been proactive in developing her understanding of these agencies. As a result, the staff team is unclear about which agencies to approach and is unable to make full use of the services available.

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 home (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1274672

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Harmony Children's Services

Registered provider address: Grants, 11 Park Place, Leeds, Yorkshire LS1 2RX

Responsible individual: Mark Raw

Registered manager: Kathleen Stott

Inspector

Debra Boldy: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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