

1274672

Registered provider: Harmony Children's Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private company and provides care for up to two children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 4 August 2021.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 29 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/09/2021	Full	Good
04/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress at this home. They have positive relationships with staff, who know them well. Staff spend time with children, show an interest in them as individuals and build positive relationships.

Children's needs are carefully considered before they move into the home. There was only one child living at the home for a considerable period before another child moved in. The manager assessed the needs of both children and identified how staff could minimise the impact of the new child moving in. Children are supported to have a positive experience moving into the home, which helps support stability. One child remembers their first day and how they felt welcomed by the staff. The child said, 'I remember my first night here. It was really good. I got to choose my favourite takeaway, which we all ate and sat chatting.'

Children take part in a wide range of activities. These include ice skating, roller skating, gymnastics, swimming, shopping, movie nights at the home and caravan holidays. Staff encourage children to try new experiences as well as engage in activities they enjoy, which helps children to make progress.

Children are in good health and their health needs are met. Staff ensure that children attend health appointments. One child is now accessing therapeutic support, which was not possible before moving into the home. Staff also have access to specialist therapeutic advice, which helps them to support children more consistently. This is helping to improve children's mental health and emotional well-being.

Children are making progress in education and staff advocate on behalf of children to improve their outcomes. One child has improved their reading. This is due to staff at the home reading with, and listening to, the child each evening. Another child has improved their attendance at school. They engage with one-to-one support provided in school, which the home's manager advocated for. As a result, children have improved experiences in education and are making progress.

Staff support children to spend time with the people who are important to them. Staff work in partnership with families to help children maintain positive links and have memorable experiences. A social worker said, 'If there is a special family occasion, the staff will support [name of child] to spend additional time with their family. The staff are flexible; anything that is in the child's best interest, they will support.'

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

Staff understand children's needs. Staff use this knowledge to support positive behaviour through distraction and de-escalation. Children receive praise and rewards to help reinforce positive behaviour. This helps children to build secure relationships and feel supported by the adults who care for them.

Episodes of children going missing from home have reduced. Staff listen to children's views and work towards shared goals, while continually reviewing levels of risk. This includes allowing children to have more time with their friends. This has led to a reduction in episodes of children going missing.

When children do go missing, staff understand the process to follow and take action to help return children home quickly. Information to help minimise risks is detailed in children's risk assessments. This includes details of who the child's friends and associates are and those who the child does not have permission to spend time with. This helps staff to provide a consistent response and keep children safe.

Allegations and children's complaints have been responded to appropriately by the manager. Investigations have been undertaken and outcomes are recorded in the children's files. However, children are not always informed in writing of the outcomes to support their understanding of action taken and decisions reached.

Gaps in employment are not always considered when recruiting new staff. This does not ensure that safer recruitment processes are followed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Children are cared for by an experienced and committed management and staff team. The manager and staff have a good understanding of children and their individual needs. The staff are nurturing and aspire for children to reach their potential.

Staff receive regular supervision with the manager or a senior member of staff. Managers support new staff through a detailed induction programme. Staff find the support effective in helping them to understand their role. The manager supports staff to complete relevant childcare qualifications within timescales. As a result, staff are suitably trained and supported to meet children's needs.

The staff have regular team meetings that provide opportunities for reflection and sharing ideas. A good level of staff attendance and engagement supports a team approach to caring for the children and effective communication.

Managers seek feedback from children, families and a range of professionals. The manager facilitates weekly meetings with children to seek their views. However, this is not transferred into the manager's quality-of-care review. There are also gaps relating to the actions the manager proposes to take to improve outcomes and the quality of care.

External monitoring of the home is taking place regularly. However, the independent visitor's reports do not provide rigorous scrutiny to demonstrate how the children are safeguarded effectively as incidents are not always reviewed in a timely way. The timing of the visits does not always enable an opportunity for children to share their views. This minimises the impact of external monitoring. Additionally, it reduces the manager's ability to use findings to improve children's experiences.

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, 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.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all gaps in employment and any time spent abroad are fully explored and understood prior to the applicant starting work at the home.	25 November 2022
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5))	25 November 2022

In particular, the registered person must ensure that the written report is accurate and includes a sufficient level of scrutiny. The registered person must be satisfied that the quality of the report is sufficient to support the independent person's opinion on the care provided.	
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Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that the outcomes of children's complaints are provided to children in writing. This will support children to understand that their views have been listened to and how they have been acted upon. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered provider should ensure that consultation with children and key stakeholders is evaluated in the manager's review of care. The report should also clearly identify actions required for the next six months and how the actions will be met. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2 and 15.4)

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: 1274672

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Harmony Children's Services

Registered provider address: Third Floor, 10 South Parade, Leeds LS1 5QS

Responsible individual: Mark Raw

Registered manager: Deborah Jagger

Inspector

Sadie Mulkeen, Social Care Inspector

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