

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	06/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC461450
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Harmony Children's Services Limited
Registered provider address	11 Park Place, Leeds LS1 2RX

Responsible individual	Mark Raw
Registered manager	Keith Poynton
Inspector	Pauline Yates

Inspection date	06/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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

SC461450

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people experience care that is consistent and stable. Through this consistency and patience, young people develop self-awareness and begin to understand their emotions better.
- Attendance at school and young people's achievements are fully encouraged and supported by the staff.
- Routines supporting healthy development are well established. Young people are age-appropriately encouraged to begin to take steps towards learning new skills that they will require as they get older.
- Young people are supported to maintain contact with family members and manage relationships in a positive way.
- Over time, young people develop trusting relationships with staff and can talk about what is difficult in their lives. Through this, they begin to listen and use the advice that is given to them by staff.
- The recently registered manager is committed to providing child-focused care to young people and enhancing the skills of the stable staff team.

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 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
<p>6. In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, with particular reference to obtaining clarity and detail over delegated authority from the local authority:</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>(b) ensure that staff—</p> <p>(ix) make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child appropriate degree of freedom and choice.</p>	07/10/2016
<p>5. In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard, with particular reference to ensuring that therapeutic assessment and input are secured for young people and planning meetings occur within timescales:</p> <p>(c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p>	30/09/2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	30/09/2016
<p>14. In order to meet the care planning standard, with particular reference to matching considerations:</p>	30/09/2016

<p>(1) The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</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>7. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>(a) ensure that staff—</p> <p>(iii) help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child.</p>	30/09/2016

Recommendations

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

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. With particular reference to developing clear records of goals and progress that are evaluated and easily understood by the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement
21/07/2015	Full	Inadequate
19/02/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
19/09/2014	Full	Good

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>Young people experience sensitive care from dedicated staff. Over time, they begin to understand the emotions that they feel and learn ways of managing their feelings. As a result, the number and duration of incidents have reduced, as young people begin to exercise self-control. Young people learn how to name and talk about their feelings. One independent reviewing officer (IRO) commented, 'She can now identify what she feels inside. For example, her tummy tickles, and she has begun time-outing herself and managing her feelings. She can reflect on how she felt before, during and after. This is huge progress for her to match her feelings. Before we weren't convinced if she understood feelings of happiness or sadness.'</p> <p>Young people are supported to manage their relationships with peers and adults, and to learn from experiences or actions that may not have ended positively. Staff are both patient and consistent in their approach to young people. Staff use a range of incentives to encourage good routines and behaviours. However, some incentives are not always clear, and supporting paperwork that might track progress and outcomes in this respect is absent.</p> <p>Community-based leisure activities are fully promoted by staff and this increases young people's social network. These activities are both fun and educational and include Guides, swimming, skating and visiting the local park. One young person won a local baking award. However, the range of activities promoted by staff is not always in line with young people's growing sense of independence. This has mainly been determined by social worker restrictions and not challenged by the manager or home. Delegated authority from the social worker to the staff has been limited and unclear, leading to an over reliance upon decision making being deferred to the social worker.</p> <p>The lack of clear delegated authority has led to young people's views not being fully taken into account. Although young people are given choice over menus, activities and decor within the home, expanding the range of safe and age-appropriate time away from staff has not been fully addressed. This has led one young person to feel restricted in comparison to their peer group. The registered manager recognises this and there are plans to address the issue with the local authority.</p> <p>Young people are supported in all aspects of their education. When difficulties have arisen, staff work hard with educational staff to ensure that young people return to full-time education. As a result, attendance has risen to 100% and young people benefit from this both academically and socially.</p> <p>Young people's health is promoted through the good use of outdoor activities, healthy diets and support to attend medical appointments. Young people assist</p>	

with the preparation of meals and this encourages interest in life skills and a nutritionally balanced diet. Health is further supported through staff establishing good sleep routines and expectations in personal hygiene.

Contact with friends and family is encouraged and fully supported. One young person has experienced an increase in family contact and has seen family members for the first time in years. This is due to the manager responding to wishes and feelings expressed by the young person.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>There have been no incidents of going missing from the home since the last inspection and young people do not engage in behaviours such as drug or alcohol misuse. Young people are not considered to be at risk of child sexual exploitation. Staff are clear with regards to young people's vulnerability and these potential risks and should a young person go missing from home, the actions that they would take.</p> <p>Staff work hard on helping young people to manage their emotions and effectively employ a range of de-escalation techniques in order to defuse situations. Physical intervention is only used when this has not been successful. However, the recording of these interventions does not meet regulations. This is an administrative issue and the welfare of young people is not compromised.</p> <p>Young people say that they feel safe and that they have a trusted adult who they can talk to. Positive behaviour is continually reinforced and encouraged, and boundaries are clear.</p> <p>The staff and manager are clear with regards to the referral and management of allegations by young people. Any concerns are swiftly shared with the appropriate agencies and there is good liaison between the staff and professionals.</p> <p>There are clear and robust processes in place for the recruitment of staff. This ensures that young people are not exposed to adults who may pose a risk to their welfare. This is further supported through regular monitoring of signed staff declarations with regards to safeguarding concerns or matters such as recent convictions.</p>	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The newly appointed manager was registered with Ofsted in June 2016. He is suitably qualified and experienced, and leads a committed team of staff who are</p>	

dedicated to improving the life chances of young people. Since his appointment, both staff and professionals consider that they are supported in their roles in respect of caring for young people. One member of staff speaking about the support offered said, 'It makes us feel good having a manager here all the time. He is very much into team decisions and open discussion. I feel it is really settled and supportive.' An IRO commented in relation to the appointment of the manager, 'Things are back on track.'

The manager and staff develop and sustain good working relationships with other agencies and professionals. Regular updates and communication from the staff ensure that an up-to-date understanding of young people's progress is shared in a timely and appropriate way.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He is committed to enhancing staff skills and child-centred practice. Worksheets and booklets that focus staff attention in this way are being introduced. As a result of this, young people's views are being sought in a proactive and creative way. Staff have been further supported to develop this practice through access to and completion of training in this aspect of their work.

The manager provides regular, focused supervision that is both functional and reflective in nature. Through regular formal and informal discussion, young people's progress is discussed and alternative approaches explored. Young people make progress through living at the home across all aspects of their development.

There are processes in place that monitor the quality of care given to young people and this monitoring is completed regularly. However, the recording of progress and outcomes for young people is spread across numerous files and does not draw this together in one accessible format. In addition, young people are not currently engaged in designing or having an input into these documents.

For some young people, specialist input remains outstanding, and although raised by the manager in order to progress these plans, this has not been effective. In addition, placement of some young people has been completed without the agreed meetings taking place. This has in the short term limited staff understanding of young people's needs.

Consideration of the impact upon young people already in placement, with regards to additional young people joining the home, has not always been effective. This has led to temporary disruption of routine and stability for some young people. However, the manager is aware of the learning from this and the need for greater insight of each young person's needs.

The home presents as welcoming and young people are encouraged to have an input into putting their art work up and choosing pictures for the walls. Bedrooms are personalised to reflect the tastes and interests of young people.

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 looked after children 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 that 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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