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Orange Moon Childcare Community Interest Company
t/a @Home Childcare

Yvette@homechildcare.co.uk

Dear Mrs Yvette Oliver-Mighten

Inspection of Orange Moon Childcare Community Interest Company t/a @Home Childcare Childminder Agency

Thank you for your co-operation during the inspection on 4-7 February 2020. I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. This was the agency's second inspection and was carried out under the Childcare Act 2006, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014.

Orange Moon Childcare Community Interest Company t/a @Home Childcare Childminder Agency is effective.

Leadership and management are effective.

The quality of the agency's services is effective.

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

Summary findings

Self-evaluation is a key strength of the agency. Leaders are highly reflective and set a positive example for their staff and childminders. Leaders actively seek the views of those involved with the agency to inform their next steps, to help promote continuous improvement.

The agency ensures that the registration process, including the completion of suitability checks, training and the registration visit, means that only those suitable are registered to work with children, or live in childminding households.

Leaders have developed effective procedures for the recruitment and induction of agency staff to ensure that they have the skills and experience required to fulfil their roles. Agency staff's work is quality assured throughout their employment.

The agency's approach to checking the quality of care and education offered to children is effective. Targeted training and support for childminders, provided by the agency, successfully brings about improvement.

Safeguarding is effective at all levels and is given a high priority from the very beginning of an applicant's contact with the agency. Staff and childminders are well aware of their role and responsibility to protect children, and they know how to identify where a child may be at risk of abuse and what action to take.

Sample visits to childminders confirmed that children are making good progress in their learning and development. Childminders understand the individual needs of children and are able to provide them with learning opportunities and activities based on their interests.

Overall, leaders ensure that they have oversight of the quality of childminders' practice as well as the work of agency staff. However, there are occasions when agency staff do not ensure that records of contact with childminders, and the support given to them, are fully accurate. For example, some records had not been dated or the author had not been stated, and staff do not always make records available to leaders within a reasonable time period. This is an issue that has been identified by the agency and it is seeking to bring about improvements.

Additionally, the agency is not always consistent in its practice as a regulator. For example, while breaches of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements are quickly identified and rectified, the agency does not always manage them consistently and in line with the procedure set out in its statement of purpose.

Recommendations

- Further improve the timeliness, accuracy and effectiveness of recording systems that are in place to enable leaders to monitor the quantity and quality of support offered to childminders by agency staff.
- Develop amongst staff a consistent and accurate understanding of the actions to be taken when a childminder breaches the EYFS requirements, and check that such action is taken in line with the procedure set out in the statement of purpose.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the childminder agency

- Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the agency. They evaluate what is working well and continually look at innovative ways to improve. They are mindful to ensure that the right infrastructure is in place to support business expansion.

- The agency actively seeks the views of parents and its childminders to inform the future direction of the agency. This is done through online surveys and questionnaires. Thoughtful questions are asked, and respondents have the opportunity to respond in detail.
- Since the last inspection, the agency has taken over a number of childminders previously registered with another agency which ceased to operate. This process was managed sensitively, and the agency staff provided clear communication to those affected. Childminders report that they felt supported and reassured during this time of change.
- The agency has trialled directly employing childminders to create opportunities for those who would otherwise not have had the confidence to apply for registration. It did this in partnership with a local job centre and funded the pre-registration training for those who applied. The agency has reflected on this trial and is not going to pursue this way of working in the future. However, barriers to registration such as set-up costs, finance, fees and funding, which some find daunting, may be managed by the agency in some cases.
- The agency now directly employs agency staff and recruitment procedures have improved over time. Leaders are not prepared to compromise on quality when recruiting and the process is designed to test an individual's skills and ability prior to appointment.
- New staff are well supported through an induction process which provides them with opportunities to build their experience and confidence. Following induction, leaders continue to monitor and quality assure the work of staff to ensure consistency. This includes checking that staff use benchmarking guidance when reaching quality judgements.
- Staff take part in regular one-to-one meetings, the contents of which are recorded in writing. These meetings enable staff to share information with leaders about the quality of individual childminders, as well as allowing staff to have an input into the agency's approach to support, training and business growth. Leaders do not tolerate poor performance of staff and act quickly to resolve issues as they arise.
- The agency has developed a leadership programme. It recognises that good childminders are well placed to offer support and assess the quality of others. Those childminders identified as suitable are gradually given additional responsibilities to prepare them for the possibility of employment. For example, they may deliver training, or set up and coordinate a social media support group in their area.
- Prior to registration, applicants are fully prepared for the responsibility of running a business and providing care and education for children in their own home. The agency has high aspirations for the childminders it registers.
- Pre-registration training is comprehensive and prepares childminders well. It is comprised of face-to-face training and requires applicants to complete coursework, which becomes their business plan. Childminders require a good level of mathematics and English from the outset.

- The process for the registration of childminders is thorough, which ensures the suitability of those providing care and those living in childminding households. Leaders review all concerns that are received from suitability checks in order to come to fair decisions based on clear and documented evidence. They are not afraid to refuse registration where they are not satisfied of an applicant's suitability.
- Registration visits are designed to test the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the EYFS requirements. Ongoing suitability is monitored through completion of detailed annual suitability declarations. Childminders spoken to were well aware of the need to notify the agency of any incidents or events that might impact on their continued suitability for registration.
- Leaders have tested several different ways in which to evaluate the quality of care and education provided by their childminders. They have based their current system of assessment on several differing frameworks, which they have adapted and merged to suit the needs of the agency's quality improvement approach. Assessment by the agency, of how childminders operate, covers all areas of the EYFS and is assessed by observation, discussions and a review of documentation.
- The agency uses a combination of electronic and paper-based recording systems to record oversight, support and monitoring of its childminders. Occasionally, records of support are not completed in a timely manner. This means that leaders and managers do not always have full oversight of all childminders. The agency has identified this as an issue.
- The agency is clear that childminders must engage with its support and quality assurance systems if they are to remain registered. For example, leaders have cancelled a childminder's registration when they did not adhere to these expectations.
- The agency is less clear on the actions it needs to take as a regulator when childminders are found to be non-compliant with EYFS requirements. The agency is very quick to identify such breaches and puts intensive support in place to bring about compliance. However, the agency is not consistent in how it deals with such breaches. For example, it sometimes issues a notice to improve, but not every time, without a clear rationale as to why.
- Safeguarding is effective and features high on the agency's agenda. Childminders attend mandatory face-to-face safeguarding training and gain a thorough knowledge and understanding of their role and how to keep children safe. The training is in-depth, regularly reviewed and updated, and also takes account of wider safeguarding issues, such as risk from extremism and domestic violence. Agency workers know what to do if they encounter child protection concerns during the course of their work. However, they are less clear on the agency's formal powers to suspend childminders in such cases.
- Leaders are clear that they would act to cancel a childminder's registration if the childminder continued to operate in breach of EYFS requirements after support and training has been offered or undertaken.

- The agency has a separate training academy and all childminders are encouraged to gain a childcare qualification. Childminding assistants are also encouraged to access apprenticeship qualification training. Childminders' views are sought on topics that they would like for future training, and recommendations from quality assurance visits are also reviewed to identify themes and developmental needs for future training.
- A key strength of the agency is equality and diversity. Childminders are supported to gain a greater understanding of the need to provide an inclusive service, and to promote and celebrate differences in their day-to-day practice through discussion, activities and resources. This was observed in the sampling visits completed to agency childminders as part of the inspection.
- The agency recognises the importance of post-registration support and monitoring. Childminders receive two visits in the first year of their registration in line with statutory requirements. Additionally, they receive support in other forms which is over and above the legal requirements. Childminders confirm that they can seek ad hoc support at any time and the agency is easy to contact.
- The agency has formed strong working relationships with some local authorities within whose areas it operates. Leaders are working hard to engage with other local authorities to raise awareness of the benefits of agency registration.
- The agency acts in a professional way when dealing with complaints. It thoroughly investigates any complaints, acting on the outcomes where necessary to improve its service.

The quality of the agency's services

- Childminders spoke highly of the face-to-face training provided by the agency prior to registration, both in terms of content and in the way it gave them opportunities to extend their learning through discussion and sharing of ideas. Childminders confirmed that they also access webinars from home, and that they can retake modules of training as and when they wish. This training is also made available to childminders' assistants.
- Childminders praise the agency for the regular support that it offers and the reassurance this affords them in knowing they are 'doing it right'.
- The agency provides childminders with template policies, procedures and records to support them in their compliance with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS. Childminders are clear that these documents must be personalised to meet the individual needs of their setting. For example, it is childminders' responsibility to research and input relevant telephone numbers for contact with external agencies, such as children's social care, and to find out about local safeguarding partnerships in their areas.
- Judgements given at annual quality assurance visits are accurate, based on evidence gathered through discussion and observation during sampling visits. Recommendations and actions set at quality assurance visits are well targeted to bring about improvements in practice. Leaders monitor all inspection outcomes

and challenge staff if they feel that judgements are not accurate, based on the evidence and past inspection history.

- Social media groups have been established to nurture links between childminders who live in the same locality. These links provide support and discussion on relevant topics and encourage the sharing of ideas. Childminders have already had some opportunities to meet up. For example, they have taken part in nature walks and a 'bear hunt' in the park with their minded children.
- The agency encourages childminders to reflect on the quality of care and education that they provide and where they can improve their services. To support this, the agency provides childminders with a portfolio, which they then maintain and develop. The agency reviews and discusses the content of the portfolio as part of their support and inspection visits.
- The agency shares the outcomes of quality assurance visits with parents and local authorities and publishes the reports on the agency website. It also shares good news stories with parents. For example, it will text parents to let them know when their childminder has gained a childcare qualification.
- Agency workers have formed positive relationships with the childminders that they support. They are clear in their communication to childminders as to what a quality assurance visit entails, and how they will gather evidence to reach a judgement. They are friendly and approachable and are sensitive to the needs of children. Feedback is given at the end of the visit and judgements are based on a robust evidence base. Childminders report that they find annual quality assurance visits useful as they celebrate what they do well, and to help them identify where they need to improve. A childminder spoken to confirmed that training following her visit had enabled her to make better use of observations to inform assessment, so that she can plan more effectively to support children's next steps in their learning.
- Where there are concerns about the quality of care and education being provided, the agency is quick to identify this and target its support.
- Quality assurance activities undertaken by the agency enable it to assess whether childminders support children's learning and development well and find out what is being done to help them catch up in their learning. Childminders are supported by the agency to meet the individual needs of the children in their care.
- Childminders are supported well in their next steps to take when they identify concerns about a child or family. The agency checks that a referral is made to the appropriate agency without delay and monitors what happens next to ensure the continued welfare of the child, and to offer ongoing support to the childminder in meeting the family's needs.

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

- Childminders keep children safe and well. They understand safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they have concerns about a child, or if a safeguarding allegation is made against them, one of their assistants or a household member.
- Children form secure attachments with their childminders and appear happy in their care. Premises used for care provide warm and welcoming learning environments.
- The majority of childminders sampled during the inspection support children well to make progress in their learning. They provide educational opportunities which extend children's experiences and prepare them for the next stages in their learning.
- Childminders know their minded children, their likes and dislikes, and can explain where their children are in their development across all seven areas of learning. Many childminders use the software package recommended by the agency to track children's progress. This software can also be accessed by parents so that they can see their children's development as it progresses. The agency can view these records ahead of its visits or contacts. This enables the agency to prepare for the best way to support the childminders. The agency does not force this system on childminders. It recommends other ways that childminders can track children when they feel the software package is not suited to the individual needs of the childminder.
- Childminders support children as they lead their own play. For example, children excitedly recall the ingredients and the method they have used to make play dough. The childminder encourages them to find other resources to integrate into their play as they use their hands to manipulate and shape the dough and merge colours. They encourage the children to talk about the change in consistency of the mixture as they make their dough from raw ingredients.
- Some childminders have expanded their services and employ assistants. Assistants were seen to demonstrate effective teaching skills, such as listening, questioning, repeating and explaining to children. They encouraged children's engagement and promoted their speech and language.
- Childminders enable children to take managed risks and to consider their own safety. For example, they asked children to think about the consequences to themselves of jumping from a sofa onto the floor when playing 'super heroes'.
- Childminders communicate clearly with parents about their children to promote consistency in learning at home. Parents spoken to confirmed that they were very happy with the care provided. Childminders provide support and advice to parents where appropriate on relevant topics, for example advice on toilet training and safety advice when potential risks are identified.
- Childminders actively share information about children across other settings that children attend, such as other childminders or pre-schools. A number of the childminders sampled reported that they also work closely with other professionals

where appropriate. For example, they work with speech and language therapists to close gaps in children's speech and communication.

- Children's behaviour is managed well. Childminders encourage children to share when they disagree over resources. Praise is given for achievements, and this supports children's self-esteem and confidence.
- Children's communication skills are supported well from an early age. For example, a childminder was observed to use the time while she was changing a baby's nappy to engage positively with the baby by speaking to them, maintaining eye contact and using hand gestures in their interactions. The baby babbled and giggled in response.
- During a visit to a childminder, the inspector observed that they adapted a story time session in response to children's individual developmental needs and levels of concentration. This meant that all children could participate. Children chose which songs they wanted to sing, and mathematical language was introduced such as counting 'the monkeys on the bed'.
- Sampling visits confirmed that additional funding is used effectively to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example for the provision of one-to-one support, or to access specialist training.
- A childminder who was visited as part of the inspection confirmed that she sources additional activities to broaden the experiences of the children who attend, for example through delivery of children's yoga lessons and hands-on science sessions.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Bell
Early Years Senior Officer

Information about the inspection

This inspection was conducted by an Early Years Senior Officer, and one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Additionally, a number of early years regulatory inspectors across the country took part in inspection sampling activities. The inspection took place over three days.

- Inspectors undertook visits to childminders to test the robustness of the registration process, the quality of support and training offered by the agency, and the systems in place to monitor the quality of childcare provision.
- An inspector undertook observations of an inspection to test the quality of the work of the agency's employees.

- An inspector listened in to a progress review by telephone and a one-month post registration support call.
- Inspectors held in-depth discussions with the nominated individual about their role and responsibilities. This included discussions regarding their registration and regulation of childminders, and how they monitor the quality of their provision. It also included discussion as to how the nominated individual recruits employees and contracted staff, and ensures the quality of their work, how well they offer support and training to childminders, and how they self-evaluate their services overall.
- Inspectors sampled a range of policies, procedures and records designed to ensure the safe and efficient management of the agency. This included records of registration, records of support visits and inspections to childminders, records of recruitment for employees and contracted staff, records kept in relation to regulatory matters, and information provided to childminders and parents regarding the support and services available.
- The inspectors reviewed the agency's statement of purpose to check it met the requirements set out in regulation.
- Inspectors sampled training material to test the quality of training offered to childminding applicants and registered childminders.
- The views of childminders and parents were also taken into account.

Information about the agency

@Home Childcare Childminder Agency registered in December 2015. Orange Moon Childcare Community Interest Company is the parent organisation under which the childminder agency operates. The agency operates from a central office in Nottingham and currently has 75 registered childminders located across Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Sheffield, North Somerset, Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire, Bristol City, Swindon, Oxfordshire, Rotherham and Solihull. It registers childminders on the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register. The agency employs two Support and Monitoring Officers – one is employed and one works for the agency on a freelance basis. The agency also employs an inspector.