

SC065071

Registered provider: Hopscotch Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to 14 children who may have an autism spectrum disorder, learning difficulties, challenging behaviour, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, epilepsy and/or dyspraxia. The home also incorporates a school. The home is privately owned.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 June 2019

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
08/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/12/2017	Full	Inadequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Particular attention should be given to accuracy, recording injuries on accident forms, staff signing risk assessments, archiving, strengthening records of safeguarding concerns and complaints. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8)
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The home should play a full part in promoting the best interests of the child, proactively advocating for the child to ensure that others play their role and deliver the high quality support that is needed. Such partnership working should always take place when the child prepares to return home, move to another setting or leave care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.4)
- A child's plans should form the basis of their care, and providers should use their judgement as to what is relevant in each case. In particular, plans should be concise and accessible. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy. Providing opportunities for children to have fun is a core component of care planning. Children enjoy a huge range of activities in the home and in the community. These include walks, trips to theme parks and going to the cinema. Children also have access to a play area with new play equipment including a climbing wall. Children clearly enjoy and benefit from looking after the home's rabbits.

Regular consultation with children is embedded into the culture of the home. The feelings and wishes of children are sought and valued. Staff use a range of innovative

methods to gather children's views. These include picture exchange communication, timelines, signs and symbols. Staff know the children very well and respond positively to their gestures and body language. Children's suggestions are all read and replied to. For example, one child asked for a television in his room and lamp posts in the garden. Both wishes were fulfilled.

Children are making good progress in developing life skills such as cooking, shopping, cleaning, and personal hygiene. These skills help children to transition into adulthood successfully.

Children's moves into and out of the home are usually well planned and carefully executed. When children move into the home, carefully tailored plans ensure that children do not experience unnecessary stress or anxiety and settle quickly. However, for one child, plans for moving from the home have been brought forward and came as a surprise to parents and the social worker.

Children's health is very well supported. Staff work well with healthcare professionals, including mental health services. Medication is safely managed. Children are encouraged to be active. They are provided with some healthy options at mealtimes, such as fruit and vegetables. However, some children are permitted to regularly eat unhealthy options. For example, two children had sausages several times during a week despite the availability of more healthy options.

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

Children are confident and comfortable in their home. They feel safe and secure. There are few incidents and physical intervention is rarely required. Sanctions are given if the child fully understands the concept, but staff prefer to use rewards and incentives to promote good behaviour.

When children are struggling with their behaviour, effective support plans are drawn up in consultation with partner agencies and parents. For example, collaboration between mental health services, care staff, education staff and the local authority supports a child who is currently struggling to manage his anger. Strategies are explained clearly to the child who then provides his own views about how staff can help him.

The safety of children is central to all practice. Staff have a good understanding of the home's safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures, which helps to keep children safe. Risk management plans are effective at reducing risks but do not prevent children from taking well-managed risks such as using the climbing wall.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is enthusiastic and passionate about providing good outcomes for children. She is qualified and very experienced. She is ambitious to develop the service and has put forward a number of proposals to senior managers in the organisation.

The home now has a full staff team. Consequently, the use of agency staff has reduced significantly. This improves continuity of care and consistency for the children. Staff enjoy their work. They love seeing the children make progress.

Just over half of the staff team are qualified, with others either working towards the appropriate qualification or in their probation period. Staff feel very well supported and have access to good training opportunities. However, records of supervision do not demonstrate that supervisions are reflective or that they challenge staff to continually improve their practice.

Records, overall, are much improved since the last inspection. However, some weaknesses remain in relation to:

- Lack of accuracy of some records, such as incorrect dates
- Ensuring that injuries are recorded fully on accident forms
- Missing staff signatures on risk assessments
- Archiving systems.

Care planning documents are very detailed and contain chronologies that go back some years. This can make it difficult for staff to ascertain what is important to know about the child now.

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

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC065071

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Hopscotch Solutions Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Merchant Place, River Street, Bolton BL2 1BX

Responsible individual: Patricia Gregory

Registered manager: Kirsty Truesdale

Inspector(s)

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

Sonia Hay, social care inspector

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