

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 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.

The home is led by an experienced and registered manager.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 25 June 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/06/2019	Full	Good
05/03/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
08/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The highly dedicated team provides exceptional care. As a result, all children make excellent progress from their starting points and have positive experiences. Children who previously experienced high degrees of social isolation have been supported to access community, social and educational opportunities. Trusted relationships between staff and children have helped children to benefit from the positive experiences provided. One child has progressed from having no verbal communication to now speaking to staff. Staff are incredibly proud of the progress that children make.

The committed team has worked creatively and resiliently in responding to the unprecedented challenges faced during the pandemic. Staff moved into the home to support a period of lockdown. There was a whole team approach in going above and beyond to ensure that care arrangements were uninterrupted for children. Staff reported that they were also very well supported.

There is a holistic approach to supporting children to access the community. Careful planning and risk management are considered when coordinating activities and trips out. Children have daily activity charts and individual communication plans. Children are very well prepared. There is a coordinated approach with the speech and language therapy team. Staff understand the importance of children experiencing consistency, and this is fully embedded in children's day-to-day care planning. As a result, there is a reduction in behaviours that challenge.

There is extensive evidence of positive direct work with children. These sessions focus on children's individual targets and cover several important areas of learning. There is creative recording and evidence of how these sessions are carried out. These sessions contribute to the multi-disciplinary team approach where plans are reviewed, and next steps are coordinated. This service does not stand still. Staff continually review children's plans to enhance their development and care experiences.

Feedback from parents and carers is highly positive. There are excellent working relationships between staff and families. One parent said, 'Staff really know my son very well. They go above and beyond for him.'

Diversity and difference, for children and staff, are respected and celebrated. During the inspection, a child was supported in his daily prayer routine. Children's religious, cultural and individual needs are recognised as being a critical part of children's identities.

There is thoughtful, bespoke planning for children moving into or moving on from the home. There are extensive discussions and multi-agency planning with staff, children and their families around transitions. Several children have moved into and out of the home since the last inspection. Careful planning and thoughtfulness have led to successful, planned transitions for all. Staff provide flexible support and are responsive to changes. One parent, talking about their son's move, said, 'His successful transition was thanks to the hard work of staff.'

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

Staff work tirelessly to ensure that children are safe. Highly effective risk assessments and risk-management plans promote children's safety. Children are supported whenever possible to take measured and age-appropriate risks in line with their care plan and development needs.

Children live in an environment that meets their sensory needs. They can be calm in their environment. The registered manager learns from incidents and quickly makes changes. This means that children's risks reduce and there are less incidents of behaviours that challenge.

Any physical restrictive practices are very much the last resort after extensive pro-active measures are tried. These interventions are robustly reviewed by managers. Reflective discussions take place with staff. Children's views are sought by using a pictorial and accessible format. Excellent work takes place following incidents to try and reduce children's anxieties and to help children to manage strong emotions safely.

Any incidents that take place which may impact on the safety of children are thoroughly investigated. Safeguarding agencies are advised and families are informed. Follow-up direct work is undertaken with children. This provider takes seriously all matters that may affect children. Consequently, children become safer.

Staff undertake a broad range of good-quality training in safeguarding matters. Safeguarding themes are further explored in supervisions, team meetings, handovers and upskilling exercises. Staff understand the importance of an open safeguarding culture. As a result, staff know how to recognise, report and act on any safeguarding concerns that they may have.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager, deputy managers and team leaders are inspirational, confident and ambitious for children. They create a culture of high aspiration and positivity and have high expectations of staff. Staff have advocated exceptionally well for children. This has included extensive support with transitions in order to ensure that these critical plans centre on what is in the children's best interests. Managers ensure that children are always kept in mind.

Managers understand the experiences of children and families and the challenges that they have experienced during the pandemic. Children and families have been exceptionally well supported. A parent said, 'I know they are always there to help me. I do only ever use this as a last resort, but it is so helpful to know they are there if I need them.' Staff often provide valuable support to families when children visit home. Staff understand the importance of preparing children to reintegrate back into community following the lockdown periods. This has been carefully planned and risk assessed for each child.

The manager is clear about the ethos of the home and the model of care that the staff team uses. Managers provide extensive and creative support to staff in several key areas of practice, including understanding the concept of closed cultures and the importance of communication, and sensory interventions for children in the setting. The multi-disciplinary approach ensures that core theoretical approaches are fully embedded and consistent across the service.

Staff receive relevant training and mentoring opportunities to equip them to do their jobs very well. The manager's organisation of the home is exemplary. For example, the medication administration system is extremely well managed, with clear processes in place to reduce the risk of mistakes. Staff must hold the relevant level 3 qualification before administering medication, and they undertake stringent training. In addition, team leaders undertake monthly competence checks with each staff member. There is clear evidence of management monitoring across all processes within the home.

The staff team is cohesive and positive. They have high regard for each other and for the children they work with. Staff morale has been extraordinary, and staff have been flexible in offering additional shifts to cover when needed and necessary. Staff report that they 'love' working at the home. Communication between the staff is excellent and very clear. This ensures that children are receiving safe and consistent care.

Staff describe the manager's support as exceptional. Staff clearly feel that they are being invested in. There is evidence in the home's development plan of positive succession planning. This includes opportunities for senior staff to progress with leadership qualifications. In addition, the manager's skills and experience are utilised as part of the wider organisation for quality assurance of other services.

Professionals were unanimously positive about the service. A social worker said, 'The registered manager is brilliant. [She] has worked with me as and when needed. Communication has been great.'

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: SC065071

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Hopscotch Solutions Limited

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Kirsty Truesdale

Inspectors

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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