

1224674

Registered provider: Hopscotch Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to seven children who have autism spectrum disorder and/or learning disabilities. It is privately owned and has a school on site.

The inspector was aware during this inspection that serious child protection allegations were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspector's judgements.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 July 2019

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected inadequate

The effectiveness of leaders and managers inadequate

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: 21 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/07/2018	Full	Outstanding
19/02/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/12/2017	Full	Inadequate

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
<p>*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>(Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(iii)(v))</p>	<p>23/08/2019</p>
<p>*The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as</p>	<p>23/08/2019</p>

<p>recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p>	
<p>*The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being.</p> <p>(Regulation 10(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv))</p>	<p>23/08/2019</p>
<p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>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> <p>(Regulation 5(c))</p>	<p>23/08/2019</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p>	<p>23/08/2019</p>

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and

promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;

ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child.

(Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d)(e))

*Compliance notice

Recommendations

- The registered person is to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to administer any medication. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- Staff supervision must enable staff to reflect and act upon how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 39, paragraph 8.15)
- For children’s homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children’s homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Some staff demonstrate a lack of understanding of how to communicate effectively with children who have autistic spectrum disorder. In some cases, staff have raised their voices and have been disrespectful in the way that they talk to children. On at least one occasion, a member of staff has pushed a child. Such conduct is likely to cause distress, particularly for children who struggle to process verbal language and are non-verbal.

Staff have not provided good support for a child with a serious dietary condition. Health professionals have instructed staff to encourage the child to expand his diet. This is recorded in his care plan, but is not consistently carried out. Furthermore, current mealtime arrangements do not support the child to improve his diet. He is seated close to other children despite the fact that this causes him anxiety. This does not support him to try new food. The child's condition has deteriorated as a result.

A child has not had a review of his education, health and care plan since he moved into the home. This is now overdue, and the plan is inaccurate. The manager has not escalated concerns about this to ensure that a review takes place as soon as possible.

Care planning documents do not always include important information. For example, one child's family contact arrangements are not set out clearly, even though contact restrictions are in place. Some strategies for managing complex behaviours are also not set out clearly. This has the potential to result in inconsistent practice.

Despite the shortfalls identified, children generally present as happy and settled. Some children are making good progress, particularly with managing their own behaviour and developing their life skills. They enjoy a range of activities in the home and the community.

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

The safety of children has been compromised by some staff. A member of staff has recently pushed a child on at least one occasion. Appropriate action has now been taken to ensure that the member of staff no longer has contact with children. However, staff have not always reported safeguarding concerns quickly enough. This has the potential to leave children vulnerable to mistreatment.

Staff sometimes lack professional curiosity and do not carefully scrutinise potential concerns. For example, staff did not make further enquiries about unexplained bruising to a particular child because they believed that the child's medical condition leads them to them bruise easily. There is no medical or historical evidence to support this belief.

Staff have not informed their managers of their suspicions and concerns about the

behaviour of other staff. This is because they did not recognise the potential negative impact that this behaviour would have on the quality of care delivered to children. The failure to pass on concerns means that potentially inappropriate behaviour by staff is not promptly addressed.

Children's fire evacuation plans are not individualised to the needs of particular children. They are also not updated when concerns are raised about children's ability to evacuate the building safely when the fire alarm sounds.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager is currently on leave and will not be returning until the autumn. An interim manager was appointed, but has now left. Another interim manager is in post, but has not yet been registered. There has also been a recent change to the responsible individual. Frequent changes to the management of the home have contributed to a deterioration in the standard of management in the home.

There has been a high turnover of staff. Agency and bank staff have often been relied on to ensure that there is sufficient staffing. This means that there has been a lack of continuity for children. Furthermore, agency workers do not start their day at the same time as core staff. This reduces staffing numbers at particular times of the day and impacts on the quality of care delivered.

The staff are not well trained. The staff's inductions are poorly organised. Staff undertake a large number of training courses in a very short period of time. As a result, it is likely that important information is not retained. Some of this training, such as safeguarding training, is critical. High staff turnover contributes to the fact that less than half of the staff team is qualified. The lack of qualified staff is exacerbated by the fact that the staff employed through an agency are also unqualified.

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: 1224674

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hopscotch Solutions Limited

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

Responsible individual: Patricia Gregory

Registered manager: Amy Merchant

Inspector

Joanne Vyas: social care inspector

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