

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.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 August 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 17 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Three compliance notices were issued at the last inspection. These were about healthcare, welfare and safety of children. Two compliance notices were met at this inspection but the welfare of children is not yet satisfactory and, therefore, quality standard 6 compliance notice has been reissued.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/07/2019	Full	Inadequate
21/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/07/2018	Full	Outstanding
19/02/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 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 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>	04/11/2019
<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>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child</p>	10/11/2019

<p>and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(f))</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>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(h))</p>	<p>10/11/2019</p>
<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 the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p> <p>Particularly in regard to ensuring that managers regularly review practice to inform their assessment of whether staff are providing safe care. Managers then need to take effective action to address identified shortfalls in practice.</p>	<p>04/11/2019</p>

*compliance notice

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Managers have demonstrated a clear commitment to addressing the concerns raised at the previous inspection. A lot of work has been done in a short space of time to change the culture and practice of this home. However, further improvement is still required.

In most situations, staff engage positively with children. However, some staff have inappropriate discussions in front of children. They speak to other members of staff about the child, listing their negative behaviours, in front of the child. Other staff discuss adult topics and confidential information near children, which means that they may overhear the conversation. This could be emotionally upsetting for children and

demonstrates that recent staff training has not yet been embedded into practice.

Some staff are still not adhering fully to care plans and risk assessments. For example, a member of staff startled a child when they tapped them on the arm to get their attention. This is not a recognised method of communication for this child. Another child was taken out in the minibus for a drive at a time that would usually be his snack time. This led to the child becoming distressed and trying to hurt another child and staff.

Most staff appear knowledgeable about the children and their needs. Care planning has improved. Plans are easy to read and child-centred. However, they still lack detail and are inconsistent. For example, plans for one child gave different foods that the child is allergic to.

Children who have anxieties about food are starting to get the help they need. They are being offered different foods, with varying degrees of success. Health investigations are being carried out to ascertain why a child appears to have lots of bruises and bruises are being monitored much more closely.

Children make significant progress, particularly in relation to their independence skills, communication and ability to manage their own behaviour. They learn how to self-regulate when they become anxious or upset. They appear happy and relaxed around staff.

The home has been redecorated in parts. Children have chosen the decor for their own rooms and, in some cases, have helped to decorate their own room. This has given them a sense of pride and achievement. Photographs of children and staff on canvasses help to give the environment a homelier feel. Staff continue to use radios to keep in contact with each other, but managers are looking at alternative ways of doing this.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Prior to the last inspection, a number of allegations against staff were made. A number of these allegations have now been substantiated. Findings of investigations confirm that children had been mistreated.

Since the last inspection, a further allegation of mistreatment has been made. Responses to this allegation were not good enough. Mistakes were made which impeded the subsequent safeguarding investigation. Furthermore, there was a lack of immediate emotional support for the child who had been harmed. Insufficient support and guidance were provided to the inexperienced interim manager following this allegation.

Overall, however, there have been some improvements in safeguarding practice. For example:

- Direct work with children about keeping themselves safe is taking place.
- There has been some better management oversight of practice.

- Managers have refocused attention on safeguarding practice through training, staff supervision and observations of practice.
- A cultural change plan, designed to address and inform staff values and attitudes, has been implemented.

The behaviour of children is usually good. Staff build positive relationships with children. Staff generally know the triggers that cause anxiety and upset and have good de-escalation skills to help children become calm again. Consequently, the number of physical intervention incidents remains very low.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Managers have failed to demonstrate sufficient professional curiosity or rigour when evaluating practice in the home. For example, a review of recent allegations was completed by someone who was not independent of the allegations and was inexperienced in completing such a report. Consequently, the report is not analytical or impartial.

Audits of care planning systems are ineffective. For example, there are inconsistencies throughout care planning processes. These have not been identified or addressed by managers. Managers audit children's records daily. However, these audits do not always result in better quality records. For example, a night section of a child's journal had not been completed on two occasions at the beginning of August. The team manager had noted this shortfall, but the section had still not been completed by the end of August. In addition, there are inconsistencies between personal evacuation plans and behaviour support plans.

Senior managers and the management team within the home have shown a commitment to improving practice. Senior managers are regularly spending time in the home and undertaking observations of practice as well as conducting training for all staff. However, analysis of incidents is not rigorous enough and not sufficiently child-focused. For example, managers have not yet explored the suitability of some questionable practice, such as taking a child out for a drive that lasted over four hours.

Managers have contacted placing authorities to ensure that they have all the information about children that they need. Education, health and care plan meetings have been organised to ensure that there is a multi-agency approach to health, care and education.

A senior manager has completed a cultural change plan. This is a good piece of work that is honest and transparent. It openly analyses the culture within the home and provides a clear plan to address shortfalls.

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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