

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 autistic spectrum disorder and/or learning disabilities. It is privately owned and has a school on site.

Due to Covid-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 17 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 June 2021

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: 28 August 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/07/2019	Full	Inadequate
21/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/07/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made by the provider. Children are making good progress. They are relaxed, settled and happy at the home.

Staff show a good understanding of children's needs. Staff understand each child's unique style of communication. They are creative in finding ways to gather children's views about their care and education.

Children are supported well to attend and engage in education. There is a flexible and personalised approach to this. Children are helped by care staff in the classroom and this promotes continuity of care.

Children take part in a variety of fun activities. As well as being enjoyable, these activities enhance children's social and emotional development.

Careful thought has gone into supporting children through the pandemic. For example, each child has had a social story shared with them in preparation for their vaccination. Close working relationships between care staff and specialist therapists benefit children.

Children's health needs are well understood by staff. Because staff have such a good understanding of the children, they quickly identify early indications that something is wrong. For example, one child had toothache but was unable to verbalise that he was in pain. Staff quickly recognised and resolved the problem.

Staff ensure that children are well supported to keep in contact with people who matter to them. A social worker said: 'It is not just about the support to the children here, it is about the family too.'

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

The manager takes appropriate action to keep children and staff safe. Allegations and concerns are well managed. Referrals are made promptly to the designated officer. A variety of communication methods are used to seek children's views after any incident. Following an incident, a staff member not involved in the incident talks with the child about what has happened and how they are feeling. Social stories are used to help children understand what has happened during incidents.

Medication is stored appropriately. The systems and processes for ordering and administering medication are good, meaning that medication errors are rare. All errors are thoroughly investigated, and lead to improvements that lessen the chance of errors reoccurring.

Staff have a good understanding of the children's needs, risks and behaviours from when children first move into the home. Children require high levels of supervision. Staff understand the importance of this. Incidents of behaviours that challenge reduce for most children who live at the home.

Staff provide children with consistent boundaries. They know the children very well. They understand their triggers and how to respond to them. However, guidance to staff in responding to low-level behaviours that occur frequently, such as grabbing of clothes, are not detailed in behaviour support plans.

Restraint is rarely used. However, the threshold for recording disengagement is unclear, which means that some instances may not be appropriately recorded. This means that the manager may not have full oversight of the use of some restrictive practices.

Recruitment procedures are not sufficiently robust. Specifically, references are not consistently obtained or verified. This means that there is an increased risk of potentially unsuitable people being employed to work at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new manager has relevant experience in children's services and has submitted his application for registration to Ofsted. He understands the importance of an open and transparent safeguarding culture. He has identified some key areas for improvement and started to address some weaknesses in practice. The manager makes sure that children are able to have a voice in their day-to-day care.

The service has experienced significant changes in leadership and management over the last two years. In addition, many staff have left and new staff have joined the team. Despite this, a group of dedicated and skilled core staff maintain good-quality, consistent care for children.

Children are supervised continually, and some children require 2-1 staffing. Some children in the home have complex personal care needs. At times, staff have felt stretched and under pressure, noting that they complete domestic and cleaning tasks as well as delivering care to the children.

Staff receive regular supervision from managers who they have confidence in. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item in supervision and staff are encouraged to raise any matters of concern. Safeguarding procedures are regularly discussed and reviewed with staff, including their understanding of the whistleblowing procedures.

The development plan is very detailed and kept under regular review. The responsible individual has a good oversight of the service and is clear about the strengths and areas of potential development. Improvement has been maintained despite the changes in management and difficulties with staff continuity.

The quality of incident recording is varied. Some records are excellent, but others lack detail.

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 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>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(d)(e))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that sufficient staff are deployed.</p>	<p>18 September 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(d))</p>	<p>18 July 2021</p>

In particular, managers need to ensure that they have full and satisfactory information about staff.	
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Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: 1224674

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hopscotch Solutions Limited

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

Responsible individual: Katie Harrison

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector

Alison Marshall, Social Care Inspector

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