

# SC059842

Registered provider: Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This local authority short-break service is registered to provide care for up to five children. The home provides planned short-break care for children with severe learning disabilities who may also have additional healthcare needs arising from physical and sensory impairments.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022. He is also registered to manage a second short-break home provided by the local authority.

### Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2024

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 23 March 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2023	Full	Good
22/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
21/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
11/10/2018	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children experience warm and nurturing care from a skilled and experienced staff team. Staff knowledge of each child, and the quality of relationships in the home, mean that children have positive experiences when they are cared for away from their family. One parent said: 'This home is like a second family for my child.'

Children's introductions to the home are well planned and move at the pace of the child and their family. Staff visit children in school and meet teaching staff in order to get to know the child and build up an understanding of their needs. This considered approach means that children only start to use the service when it is in their best interests to do so and when staff can meet their needs.

Children with complex needs have lots of opportunities to have fun and take part in a range of activities. During the inspection, children and staff celebrated Valentine's Day. The dining room was decorated with hearts and children were given a red rose to take home to their families.

The home is purpose-built for disabled children and equipment in the home meets children's physical and sensory needs. Since the last inspection, a new bath has been fitted. One child was invited to cut the ribbon and declare the bath 'open'. He also had the privilege of having the first bubble bath.

Children have the opportunity to participate in the life of the home. A number of children were involved in creating a video children's guide. This gave them the opportunity to tell other children what it is like to have short breaks. Two children have been involved in staff recruitment. They have been supported to consider the important questions they want to ask prospective staff and to ask these as part of the interview process. These opportunities build skills and confidence and demonstrate to children that they are valued.

There is currently no consistent approach to sharing information with parents about their child's stay. As a result, parents do not always have the information they need to understand their child's experiences or to raise questions or concerns.

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

The good quality of individualised care that children receive is underpinned by clear and detailed written care records. Although these are regularly reviewed and updated, it is not always clear what changes have been made to records. This makes tracking children's progress and experience more difficult and means staff may miss key changes.

A social media risk assessment is now in place for those children who access the internet. These assessments clarify what social media children can access on the

home's devices and on devices that children may bring from their own homes. It provides staff and parents with a clear agreement about each child's use of the internet and helps to safeguard children from online harm.

Staff are using education, health and care plans to inform their care of children. Staff use the targets within these plans to support children to build their skills while in the home. This also ensures consistency between school and care staff in promoting children's developmental needs.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the use of restrictive practices in the care of disabled children. There is good oversight of the use of mechanical restraints, such as wheelchair straps or high-sided beds. There are clear assessments in place which link to children's plans. This ensures that children do not experience restrictions of their movement which are unnecessary and not in their best interests.

There are well-embedded systems in place for the storage, recording and administration of medication. Staff receive specialist training from health staff to inform their understanding of children's often complex medical needs. As a result, there have been no errors in relation to children's medication in the inspection period. Staff practice in this area of work is exemplary.

Since the last inspection, there have been no serious incidents which have required notification to Ofsted. Staff spoken to during the inspection have a good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children. They understand the processes in place to raise concerns about the behaviour of colleagues if required. All staff are clear that the safety and well-being of children is their priority and they will always act to safeguard children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is led by an experienced registered manager who brings a wealth of skills and knowledge to his management of the home. The registered manager also leads the local authority's second short-break service. He is able to manage his responsibilities for both services effectively with the support of a stable and experienced staff team.

The registered manager's time spent at the home is not recorded on the staffing rota. Although this does not impact on the quality of children's care, it does mean there is a lack of accountability and the manager's capacity to have effective oversight of two homes is not evidenced in these records.

Staff receive high-quality specialist training. There are strong, well-established working relationships with health colleagues. As a result, staff receive the training and advice they need to care for children with complex health needs safely. All staff participate in an annual week-long whole-team training programme. This gives staff an opportunity to learn alongside their peers and apply this learning to the care of the children who use the service.

The registered manager uses his quality of care review to evaluate practice in the home. The report arising from this review does not include an action plan which details what required improvements or tasks have been identified. As a result, there is no written plan that evidences priorities for the forthcoming period and how these will be achieved.

The registered manager is welcoming of external scrutiny. He puts into practice his learning from issues raised by the independent person's visits to the home and from inspections. A number of new children's plans, audit tools and assessments have recently been developed to further improve practice. These changes are in their infancy and need time to embed.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that changes to children's assessments and plans are clearly evidenced within the relevant documents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure there are consistent arrangements in place for sharing information with parents about their child's stay at the home, including participation in activities inside and outside of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 12, paragraph 2.11)
- The registered person should ensure that the quality of care review includes a clear, task-specific action plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 65, paragraph 5.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the registered manager's presence at the home and their working hours are clearly recorded on the staffing rota for the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.3)

### **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:** SC059842

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

**Registered provider address:** Town Hall, Victoria Square, PO Box 29, Bolton  
BL1 1RU

**Responsible individual:** Paul Rankin

**Registered manager:** Neil Haydock

## Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

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