

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.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 February 2018

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: 19 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Safeguarding arrangements have improved since the last inspection. However, further sustained improvement is needed. For example, the registered manager has not recognised that a staff member who became angry and acted unprofessionally towards staff might also present a risk to children.
- Information sharing with relevant safeguarding agencies has also improved. However, not all related information is passed on to the appropriate safeguarding agencies when staff are implicated in alleged abuse. This means that investigating agencies do not have a full understanding of the staff involved.
- Risk management strategies have not been developed to address an identified risk to children.
- Recording in children's files can be vague. This does not lead to a good understanding of the kind of behaviour that a child exhibits.
- Confidential information about children is recorded in other children's files.

The children's home's strengths:

- Children are happy and settled. They make significant progress quickly.
- Staff have warm and nurturing relationships with children. Staff know the children very well and know when they are unhappy or anxious. Staff have good strategies to alleviate anxiety.
- Children enjoy a range of activities that boost their confidence and self-esteem.
- Children are educated at the on-site school. They are supported in school by care staff, ensuring that children receive consistent care by people they know well. Older children benefit from work experience and from attending college. This helps to prepare them for the world of work.
- Children are fit and healthy. Children who are unwell are given good care.
- Children benefit from a staff team that understands them and helps them to communicate better.
- The registered manager has worked hard to address the identified shortfalls from the last inspection. This means that children are safer.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/12/2017	Full	Inadequate
08/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/04/2016	Full	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 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>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(a)(i)(vi))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that links are made between staff conduct and potential risk to children. Ensure that all relevant information is passed on to the appropriate safeguarding agencies if staff are implicated in alleged abuse. Also ensure that there are written risk assessments for all identified risks to children. This includes bedrooms that are out of the sight of staff.</p>	12/03/2018
<p>Maintain records (“case records”) for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. In particular, ensure that confidential information about other children is not included in a child’s case file. (Regulation 36(1)(a))</p>	31/03/2018

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)

Inspection judgements

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

Safeguarding arrangements have improved since the last inspection. However, these improvements are not yet fully embedded. Safeguarding concerns that have arisen since the last inspection have generally been managed well. However, safeguarding awareness and information sharing can be improved further.

Children are settled and happy. They make significant progress in:

- communicating with others
- learning how to reduce their anxiety
- life skills
- personal hygiene skills.

Children who are new to the home settle quickly because a skilled and knowledgeable staff team provides well-thought-out, consistent care.

Children are fit and healthy. They have good access to healthcare professionals, including a range of therapists who are employed by the organisation. This means that children make quick progress in areas such as communication and emotional well-being. Children who are unwell are supported effectively. Staff seek out appropriate medical intervention as required. Medication is regularly reviewed so that each child's medication is appropriate to their needs. Staff are well-trained in the safe administration of medication. Medication is safely stored and managed.

Children are educated at the on-site school but supported through the day by care staff. This helps to ensure that there is a consistent approach, helping children to make good progress. Education is tailored to children's individual needs. This helps to reduce anxiety, improving overall achievement. Older children are supported to attend college, giving them a broader educational experience.

Children are encouraged to develop crucial life skills. For example, some children cook their own meals. Others learn to use cutlery and to dress themselves. Children also take part in voluntary work such as helping at a homeless shelter or charity shop. This prepares them for the world of work as they successfully transition into adulthood. It also means that children feel a sense of pride and self-worth.

Children benefit from well-planned and supported contact with their families. If parents are unable to travel to the home, staff will arrange transport for them so that children do not miss out on family contact. For example, staff transported a family to the home on Christmas Day. Parents are supported during their visit, if required, to ensure that it is a positive experience for all. This helps to build and maintain important relationships.

Children enjoy a range of activities that are tailored towards their individual interests. Activities include swimming, going to a gym, attending a local youth club, and taking walks. Activities not only help to keep children fit and healthy but also improve their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Children have lots of opportunities to air their views, wishes and feelings. Staff have a good understanding of how each child communicates. They use communication aids effectively. These include pictures, sign language and gestures. A social worker said: 'Staff demonstrate a high knowledge of the communication methods of the young person, leading to a calmer and content young person.' Communication is enhanced by regular visits from a professional advocate, who has taken the time to get to know the children so that they feel comfortable in her presence.

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

Safeguarding practice is improving, but is not yet consistently good. The registered manager has better communication with appropriate safeguarding agencies. Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe and how to report concerns. Warm and nurturing relationships between staff and children, as well as consistent boundaries, help children to feel safe.

Risk assessments do not identify risks associated with particular bedrooms that are out of sight of staff. A child and young adult have been in each other's bedrooms without supervision, albeit for a short amount of time.

Confidential information about other children and young adults can be found in children's files. This information can be seen by the child's parents, social worker and the child themselves if they wish to access their records.

Positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. Incidents of challenging behaviour are few and managed well. Staff know and understand the children. This helps them to redirect children when they start to become anxious or upset, thus reducing the risk of children going into crisis. Staff are trained in de-escalation techniques and physical intervention. Physical intervention and sanctions are rare. Staff are starting to think about sanctions in a more restorative way to ensure that children acknowledge the impact of their behaviour on others and take steps to put it right.

High staffing levels mean that children are continuously supervised while in communal areas. Subsequently, they do not go missing from this home. Children generally get on well with each other and do not report bullying as an issue.

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

The registered manager has worked hard to address the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. She has made good progress and has a much better understanding of safeguarding processes and procedures. This will help to keep children safe. However, she has not considered staff conduct issues in the context of any potential risk to children. Not all relevant information is passed on to the appropriate safeguarding agencies when staff are implicated in alleged abuse. This means that investigating safeguarding agencies do not have a full understanding of the staff involved.

External professionals are concerned about recent safeguarding issues, but are more confident that the registered manager is better equipped to manage these competently. Communication between external agencies and the registered manager has much

improved.

The registered manager and staff have received training that has enhanced their knowledge about safeguarding practice, including safeguarding vulnerable adults. They have been very well supported by senior leaders and the management team. Staff are regularly asked about any concerns that they have about the safety and welfare of children. This means that there is a better culture around keeping children safe.

Recording of some incidents can be vague. For example, terminology like 'negative behaviour' and 'unsettled' is used, rather than describing the actions of the children. This makes it difficult to understand the behaviour and to formulate strategies to support children.

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: Charles Tosan

Registered manager: Amy Merchant

Inspector

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018