

# 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:** 3 to 4 July 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

**Date of last inspection:** 19 February 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| <b>Inspection date</b> | <b>Inspection type</b> | <b>Inspection judgement</b>     |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 19/02/2018             | Full                   | Requires improvement to be good |
| 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?

### Recommendations

- Where appropriate, the child's family should be involved in supporting their child's health needs as well as in providing permission for treatment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.14)
- A close working relationship is essential with those with parental responsibility for each child, usually their parents or other carers. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.5)
- 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)

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

This home provides children with highly individualised and effective care. Children make exceptional progress from their starting points. A parent said: 'I couldn't wish for him to be in a better place.'

Children are generally very happy. A parent said: 'He just loves it there.' Children have warm and nurturing relationships with staff and build positive relationships with the other children. They enjoy a wide range of activities that include regular trips into the local and wider community. Children are a highly integrated part of the community. They also have a variety of activities that they can enjoy in the home and the garden. These many activities provide children with highly positive experiences and a wealth of opportunities for learning, building confidence and self-esteem.

Staff provide excellent opportunities for learning life skills to help children become more independent. Currently, one child is participating in work experience, undertakes voluntary work and attends college. This is alongside learning to budget, independently shop and cook for himself. He has also completed his compulsory basic training for a motorcycle and is hoping to start driving lessons in the near future. He feels confident about moving on to independent living when the time comes.

Partnership working with parents is working well for most parents. Parents say that staff regularly contact them and ask for their views. Parents appreciate the use of social media as a highly effective tool to keep them up to date with the latest photos from activities their child has participated in. One parent said that he should be informed

more quickly when his son needs to go to hospital. This would give him the opportunity to attend, or give consent for treatment if required.

Children are fully supported and encouraged to contact family and friends. They use a range of communication devices for this, including video-calling. However, one parent has asked several times for their son not to video-call them when he is upset as they find this very distressing. This is not a regular occurrence, but staff have not listened to the parent regarding this.

Staff know and understand the children very well. Care plans are in-depth, up to date and easy to read. Furthermore, staff have developed individually tailored child-friendly care plans to help children have a better understanding of the way staff look after them, and to ensure that children can take an active role in planning their own care. Children's plans use each child's favourite superhero or cartoon character to help children engage more fully with this process. Staff keep a photographic record of children's lives prior to admission and while living at the home. This will go with children when they move on and helps children to have a better understanding of what has happened in their lives.

Communication with children is a priority for staff. They see this as an area for development but already do this very well. They use signs, symbols, gestures and technology to enable them to communicate with children. They also know the children very well and this enables them to have an in-depth understanding of what the child is trying to say. Understanding the child helps to reduce their frustration and anxiety.

The new school building is lovely and much appreciated by children. The spacious environment helps children to access learning. Staff work closely with their educational colleagues to provide a holistic and consistent service for children.

Staff respond quickly to the health needs of the children. A social worker said: 'Staff show real care and concern for his well-being.' Children access healthcare professionals, including mental health services.

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

Children learn to regulate their own behaviour over time.

Staff have warm and supportive relationships with children. This helps children to feel safe and secure. Staff have a good understanding of each child's communication needs and respond accordingly. This helps to reduce the child's frustration and prevent anxieties developing.

Incidents are very well managed by staff. Staff know exactly what to do to support the distressed child and each other. This means that children settle quickly, and often without the need for physical intervention. The registered manager reviews all incidents and establishes whether there are any patterns or trends emerging. Emerging patterns or trends are discussed with external health and social care professionals to ensure that strategies continue to be effective.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection and whistle-blowing policies. Staff work closely with external agencies to ensure that children's safety and welfare continue to be promoted.

The safety of children is paramount but does not prevent children taking well-considered risks to enhance their life experiences. For example, a child wanted to go go-karting. Highly effective risk management plans enabled him and his peer to go. It was an experience he said he thoroughly enjoyed.

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

The registered manager is experienced and qualified. She provides strong and supportive leadership. Staff say that they feel valued and empowered due to the manager's encouraging style of leadership. She has a firm understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. She has an inspirational development plan that not only addresses shortfalls but enhances the service provided for children.

The registered manager is well supported by her line manager. The manager says that she is also very well supported by her team of managers and staff.

The staff are enthusiastic and are committed to providing exceptional outcomes for children. They enjoy watching the children develop their skills and grow in confidence. They have the skills and knowledge to provide exceptional care for children. Staff genuinely care about the children and enjoy their work.

Staff have access to a wealth of training and development opportunities. They are very well supported by each other and their managers. They receive regular supervision with their line manager. Supervision is not yet reflective because staff do not review what went well and what they would do differently while caring for the children. This will help staff to further develop their skills and knowledge.

## **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:** Sandra Talbott

**Registered manager:** Amy Merchant

## Inspector(s)

Joanne Vyas, social care regulatory inspector

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