

SC059853

Registered provider: Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide short-break care for up to 6 children with learning and/or physical disabilities.

There were 2 children staying on the first day of the inspection and 3 children on the second day.

The registered manager post is vacant.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 December 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2024	Full	Good
24/01/2024	Full	Good
07/02/2023	Full	Good
22/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, short breaks were being provided for 29 children.

The arrangements for children's stays are carefully planned. Children only take short-break stays once the manager is satisfied that staff can respond effectively to their needs. Children are invited to stay with other children who share similar interests, helping them build friendships.

Children receive positive, individual care that meets their assessed needs. This means that they receive seamless care between their family home and their short breaks. Staff support children to enjoy positive experiences, and they make measurable progress during their stay.

Transitions out of the home are managed sensitively. Staff support children to understand the changes using their preferred methods of communication. Staff supported 2 children to experience a positive move into long-term residential care, which helped reduce their anxiety because familiar people were supporting them.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are actively considered through a variety of forums. The manager regularly consults with children about their time at their short breaks. Consulting with children led to the purchase of new games, sensory toys and play equipment.

Children are supported to enjoy a variety of activities. This includes visiting a light show, going on a barge and outings to a farm and zoo.

The home is specifically adapted to meet the needs of disabled children and has suitable tracking systems and equipment in place. The home has recently been redecorated. It is warm and welcoming, and the bedrooms are personalised for children during their stay. This ensures that children receive care in an environment similar to their family home.

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

Children build trusting relationships with staff. Positive interactions were observed between children and staff during the inspection, demonstrating that children are settled and comfortable at the home. On return from school, children were visibly excited to see staff, who greeted them warmly.

Staff help children to regulate their emotions and their behaviours. Physical interventions are rare; however, when they take place, they are a last resort to keep children safe. There are shortfalls in the recording of physical interventions. Staff do not consistently record their full names, and children are not always given the

opportunity to speak to someone independent of the intervention. Leaders and managers do not always record discussions with parents and social workers about physical interventions. This means there is less accountability and clarity about the child's care and interventions.

Children's complex health needs are met by an experienced and skilled staff team. Staff are trained to manage and administer medication safely to children. There are systems in place for the admission and discharge of medication, and the interim manager takes immediate action to address any medication errors.

Staff respond to accidents and injuries in a prompt and effective way. Staff ensure that parents and professionals are informed and updated.

There are some shortfalls in children's records. For example, not all children have an up-to-date local authority care plan. Children's care and support plans are up to date and reflect the children's education and health needs. However, not all documents detail the author or the review date.

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

There have been several changes in the leadership team since the last inspection. This has led to shortfalls in the monitoring and oversight of the home. The provider did not inform Ofsted that a permanent manager is in post as required in regulation. The manager has not applied to register with Ofsted.

The manager has high standards for children's care and understands their progress. The manager is aware of the home's strengths and areas for development and has begun implementing plans to drive forwards improvement. However, these are in their infancy.

Staff are not consistently supported by leaders and managers. Supervision records are brief and do not evidence that supervision is child focused or reflective. Team meetings are not taking place regularly. This means that staff do not have opportunities to reflect on their practice and explore the challenges and improvements required to support children's stays.

Parents speak positively about their relationships with staff and the positive communication between them. This helps children to settle during their stay at the home. Staff manage concerns sensitively and provide families with appropriate additional support.

There are a range of monitoring devices at the home; however, their use is not regularly reviewed. This can potentially restrict children's access and compromise their privacy.

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, The 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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(a)(f)(g)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that effective monitoring and review systems are used to make continuous improvements in the quality of care for children and evidence that parents and professionals are made aware of all incidents and concerns regarding children.	30 January 2026
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—	30 January 2026

the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the use of all monitoring and surveillance equipment is regularly reviewed to demonstrate its use as an ongoing need to safeguard children.	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a) (2)(a)(b))	30 January 2026
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (3)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all staff receive supervision in accordance with the organisation's supervision policy.	30 January 2026
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.	30 January 2026

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)— has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1) (3)(a)(vi)(b)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the full names of all staff involved in a physical intervention are recorded and that children are spoken to by someone independent of the intervention.	
The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children’s plans are updated regularly, contain accurate information and are signed and dated by the author.	30 January 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the workforce development plan is regularly updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff working at the home and use the plan to record the ongoing training and continued professional development needs of the manager and staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: SC059853

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Kelly McCurdy, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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