

SC369857

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 operated by a local authority and is registered to provide care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2025.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 February 2026

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2025	Full	Good
06/02/2024	Full	Good
01/03/2023	Full	Good
01/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All three children are settled, enjoy living at the home and are making progress from their starting points.

Children's moves out of the home are well considered, and they are supported to develop independence skills prior to moving on. Since the last inspection, two children have successfully moved to semi-independent, and two children have moved into the home. However, children's moves into the home are not always well planned, and their individual needs are not fully considered in relation to living safely alongside other children. Despite this, children are doing well because of the highly skilled and experienced team of staff who support them.

Children are supported to enjoy a variety of experiences. One child spoke to the inspector about their sixteenth birthday, when they watched their favourite football team in hospitality and met the players. Another child is looking forward to a holiday to Egypt with friends.

Staff understand the barriers that children face in education and work hard to advocate for them and improve their engagement in school. Despite the children's struggles with education, they are making progress in comparison to their previous experiences.

Children are supported to spend time with the people who are important to them, and family members are welcomed into the home. The manager understands the significance of family relationships and advocates on behalf of the children to maintain these connections. Families acknowledge and appreciate this level of support.

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

The staff team are aware of the risks faced by children and use a variety of resources to help them understand how to stay safe and recognise the signs of exploitation. Staff demonstrate professional curiosity and tenacity when they have concerns about children. They understand their safeguarding responsibilities and work closely with other professionals to ensure that children are protected.

Incidents of children going missing from home have reduced. However, when children do go missing, it is not always clear that staff consistently search for them. Risk plans intended to guide staff are not robust, as they are not updated to reflect all new locations where children have previously been found. Consequently, there have been occasions when children were missing, and these areas were not searched. This does not support keeping children safe.

Staff know the children well and have developed positive relationships with them. Staff use rewards, incentives and de-escalation techniques to support and manage children's

behaviour. Consequently, there has not been a need to use physical intervention since the last inspection.

Some significant incidents have not been notified to Ofsted, which limits the regulator's oversight of practice at the home. A recommendation has been raised in relation to this shortfall.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is qualified and experienced. She is realistic about the home's challenges and areas for development. The manager demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that children receive the best possible care and opportunities.

The manager works effectively with the children's social workers, and they speak positively about the support and communication they receive from the team.

Staff receive regular reflective supervision. These sessions provide staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice, discuss challenges and receive constructive feedback.

Staff receive training to support them in their roles. However, not all staff have completed training to help them support children experiencing grief, despite this being identified as a need by leaders and managers.

The manager's monitoring tools are not yet sufficiently robust. They did not identify that the strategy meeting minutes for one child had not been received and that several records do not include details of the author. However, the manager took action to address these shortfalls during the inspection.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (b)that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children's plans contain clear guidance for staff to follow to keep children safe and that they are updated following new information being received. Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff search for children on every occasion that they are missing from the home and search all known locations.	3 April 2026
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	3 April 2026

have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that suitability assessments are detailed and robust and that sufficient information is received to assess the suitability of all children living together safely before any child moves into the home.	
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 all records are signed by the author and that all minutes from strategy meetings are available.	3 April 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access and complete training that is identified to support them in meeting the individual needs of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend, on a public holiday

or during the manager's absence. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

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: SC369857

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Provider address: Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

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

Responsible individual: Paul Rankin

Registered manager: Gillian Spencer

Inspector

Kelly McCurdy, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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