

2496864

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care and accommodation for up to two children and/or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2018.

Visit dates: 14 to 15 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 10 December 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children develop trusting relationships with their caring adults, who pay attention to detail when getting to know each child. Staff develop personalised care, recognising the individuality of each child, which helps children to feel respected.

A piece of artwork that each child has created and chosen as their favourite is displayed on the wall of a communal area within the home. This remains on display when they have moved on, which shows children that they continue to be remembered, promoting attachment and a sense of belonging.

Staff support children to continue to make progress when they are educated at home. Staff supply children with additional education resources and opportunities to supplement their online learning. Staff keep children informed during the process of enrolment into a new education provision to help children feel prepared, assisting a smooth transition.

Staff help children to identify their preferred alternative to face-to-face contact, when the restrictions due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic prohibit social gatherings. When restrictions were eased, staff put measures in place so that family members could safely visit children, when appropriate. Children keep in touch with the people who are important to them, which supports their emotional well-being.

Staff adapt some of the activities provided in the home to incorporate hobbies that children are unable to access in the wider community due to the pandemic, so that children continue to pursue their interests and have fun.

Children regularly attend household meetings, which they sometimes chair themselves. This gives children the opportunity to gain a sense of responsibility within the home, boosting their confidence. Children are encouraged to share their views, which staff act on promptly, such as requests for what is on the menu. This inclusion and involvement show children that their voice is heard and that they are important.

The safety of children

The manager completes a detailed risk assessment when considering a new admission into the home, to help her to assess suitability and the potential risks to those already living in the home. The manager swiftly arranges any additional input from outside agencies that any new child requires, so that there is no delay in children receiving the support they need.

Staff consult a mental health practitioner, who provides a range of resources that staff use to support children who have difficulties in managing their anger. Staff creatively tailor these resources to incorporate children's interests, helping children to engage, so that they develop skills to manage their emotions and keep themselves safe.

Children who face issues such as substance misuse and smoking are supported to access specialist services. Staff seek guidance from relevant professionals to help them to understand how to meet children's complex needs. This combination of help supports children to make changes to their lifestyle, which has contributed to children becoming healthier and safer.

Children are rarely sanctioned, but when sanctions are imposed they are used to help children to develop an understanding that they are responsible for their behaviour. The manager scrutinises this practice of her staff and evaluates whether it is effective and beneficial, so that children are treated fairly.

Leaders and managers

The manager is suitably knowledgeable, skilled and qualified for the position held. She leads a small, stable and committed team. Together they provide nurturing care, which contributes to the strong bonds that children form with staff.

The manager provides her senior staff with opportunities to experience aspects of leadership to support the development of their role. She oversees this process so that the standard of practice is maintained, discussing areas for further development with her staff within supervision sessions.

Staff meetings are held regularly and are well attended. Children are routinely discussed, so that staff remain current in their knowledge of how to meet each child's needs. The manager is clear on her expectations, promoting good practice and confidently addressing any shortfalls to improve the care that children receive.

The manager regularly discusses policies and procedures with her team, proactively refreshing their knowledge, so that they feel confident to respond to issues should they arise. Staff say that they find their manager's approach supportive, and that the morale among the team is high. This helps to create a calm and positive environment for children.

The manager and her team have completed a range of training, supporting their continued development of knowledge and understanding of how to respond to children's needs and promote their safety.

The manager works collaboratively with other agencies, involving them appropriately in care planning arrangements for children. Feedback from each professional consulted was that the manager and her team communicate well and that they are committed to meeting children's needs.

The manager has effective processes in place to monitor and review the care that children receive. Case records are regularly updated with significant information, providing staff with clear guidance, so that they deliver consistent care, which helps children to feel secure.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2496864

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Caretech Limited, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Ian Raine

Registered manager: Melanie Todd

Inspector

Paula Kelly, Social Care Inspector

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