

2534827

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for four children aged between 11 and 18 who have challenging behaviours and complex needs. It is one of a group of homes run by a large independent provider. The organisation has its own school, which the children attend.

The manager has been in post since June 2020 and is registered with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 7 to 8 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 26 November 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be 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 identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Staff and children have worked together to plan activities and routines. This has helped the children to feel safe and to build secure, positive relationships with the staff. The children spoke positively about their relationships with the staff.

Education attendance remained high during the pandemic. The staff supported the children to attend the organisation's school during that time. One child achieved five GCSEs.

The children, when appropriate, maintained contact with their parents using skype. A parent said that since lockdown has been lifted, he has been able to have face-to-face contact with his child.

The staff have been proactive in helping the children to understand the rules and boundaries surrounding COVID-19. A child said that they watched the daily government briefings with the staff so that they could understand what was happening.

The safety of children

Professionals said that the children are safe at the home because the staff understand and manage potential risks effectively.

The staff continue to safeguard the children. The children have comprehensive individual risk assessments which are shared, if appropriate, with the children. One child said that this has helped her to reduce her risks.

New missing-from-care protocols are in place. These help the staff to understand the risks posed in the potential places that the children may visit.

A child made an allegation against a member of staff. The manager undertook a detailed investigation and the incident was resolved. However, the allegation was not reported to the designated officer or Ofsted. Failing to report allegations means that the children are not afforded the full range of safeguards intended by the reporting processes.

Leaders and managers

The manager was appointed just before the pandemic. Since then, she has made many improvements throughout these challenging and restrictive times.

A stable staff team is in place, which has enabled secure, positive relationships with the children. Partnership working between the manager and external professionals is effective, and information is shared to ensure that the staff can meet the children's needs well.

The managerial monitoring has improved. The staff receive regular and good-quality supervision that supports them to work with the children effectively and to develop their practice.

The independent visitor continues to monitor the home and speaks to staff and children via skype. The visitor's reports are shared with the staff and contribute to the development of the home.

The requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been met. One further requirement has been made.

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
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(e))	19/09/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2534827

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Cambian Child Care LTD, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Sarah Love

Registered manager: Sarah Vale

Inspector

Trish Palmer, Social Care Inspector

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