

2594539

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a private provider. It provides care for up to four children who may have social, emotional and/or behavioural problems.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

The home was newly registered in November 2020. This is the first inspection. The manager has been registered at the home since it opened.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 July 2021

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

Inspection type

Inspection judgement

This is the home's first inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are supported by a staff team that provides good-quality care. Children make progress as a result of living at this home. From a starting point of uncertainty, children are, with time, helped to settle at the home and build trust with the adults who care for them.

Prior to living at this home, children were not attending school. Staff have worked to re-engage children in education and learning. Some children have been helped to finish their final school year and sit some of their GCSE examinations. The ambition of the manager and staff has enabled children to reach their potential and have a brighter academic future.

The manager and staff have created a sense of community in the home. This means that the children feel less isolated because of living far away from their homes and families. Children are helped to form relationships with one another. This has helped to nurture their social skills and build on their self-esteem.

The children's health needs are well addressed. Children are supported to access specialist services such as the smoking cessation clinic, as the children have a history of smoking. However, this is not being permitted at the home. Staff educate the children on the negative impact of smoking; this is supporting the children to make healthier lifestyle choices.

Staff provide children with regular key work sessions, which has helped to develop their awareness on matters such as exploitation, bullying and independent life skills. Children are also helped with their personal care needs. One child has been assisted to attend a specialist hair salon, in support of her cultural identity. This demonstrates that children are being effectively cared for in relation to their needs and preferences.

The manager has a strong oversight of each child's care plan. He ensures that children have in place the support they need to keep in touch with individuals who are important to them. In addition, children are helped to cope with the difficult emotions that family relationships can bring. The emotional safety that the staff provide has enabled family relationships to develop more positively.

The home provides an excellent space for children to live in. The interior of the building is tastefully decorated and provides ample room for children to relax. The manager has plans to further expand the home. However, children's bedrooms are not personalised. The provider's policy on the minimal decoration of bedrooms does not empower the children's individuality or enable them to truly make their bedroom their own space. It does not help it to feel like it is their home.

Plans for children moving into the home are well thought out. The manager consults with social workers to help form an understanding of the child before a decision is made. Those children already living in the home are involved in the preparations to welcome the new arrival, for example, by buying gifts for the child. This helps children to feel more accepted as they arrive at their new home.

The staff do not keep photos or other memorabilia for the children. This does not capture fun times and important events of the children's lives while they are living at the home.

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

The positive relationships between the staff and the children help the children to express their emotions. This has reduced the risk of children feeling the need to, for example, self-harm or be in unsafe situations. Children said that they are able to speak to staff about their feelings, which is helping them to feel safe. This means that children are better protected while living at this home.

Children do not go missing from this home. The 'push and pull' factors for children are well understood by staff. The location of the home also reduces the risk of children being in unsafe situations. The staff provide children with an environment that enables them to feel safe and secure in their surroundings.

When incidents of bullying have occurred, staff have been quick to respond to offer support and protection to the children. When one child suffered racism, staff supported the child who used the hurtful words to reflect on and understand the impact of her behaviour. The child was helped to accept responsibility for her actions. This helps children to express their feelings to the adults who care for them.

Physical intervention is rarely used. When it has been used, it has prevented further escalation of unsafe behaviour. After each incident, children are helped by staff to reflect on what has happened and discuss how to use safer coping strategies. This is helping children to regulate their emotions better.

Children's positive behaviour is recognised by staff. They have celebrated with children the importance of being helpful, such as when completing household chores or helping to welcome a new child to the home. This builds the children's self-worth and motivates them to make positive choices.

Children arriving at the home at short notice are effectively risk assessed. Managers were quick to create a plan to ensure that the staff had the direction they needed. For one child, this also provided reassurance to the local authority. A social worker told the inspector, 'They already had a risk management plan in place and shared information with the police to keep [name of child] safe on her arrival.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a wealth of experience and is established in his role. He is actively involved in the running of the home and knows the progress that the children make. He has a vision of how to further improve the service as he continues to support this new team to settle and provide good care for children.

Children's case records are well organised and are completed to a good standard. The records of the children's daily life provide a reflective account of the care that they receive from staff. The style and clarity of recordings mean that children have an increased understanding of their time living in the home.

The manager has in place a system to monitor the operations of the home and the care provided to the children. To support his evaluation, the manager observes staff practice to assess their performance in key areas such as the effective use of empathy. This helps to ensure that staff are being supported to recognise the essential skills needed to care for the children living at this home.

Staff have in place regular supervision, so they can discuss their strengths and development needs. However, children are not discussed as part of the supervision process. This limits the staff's understanding of the children's needs. This delays their learning and has an impact on the quality of care provided to the children.

The independent visitor rigorously scrutinises the quality of care provided to the children. The reports provide the regulator with an accurate narrative of the children's day-to-day experience. The quality of this external monitoring process means that children are better protected.

The children told the inspector they were unhappy with some elements of their care. The manager was quick to respond and explored with the children their thoughts and feelings. The staff conducted an 'our voice' session. This enabled the children to express their discontent. As a result, the children were able to influence how they plan their week ahead with the staff.

The manager is a strong advocate for the children. He ensures that the children's wishes and feelings with regards to their future are shared with social workers. He ensures that the child's voice is not lost, as decisions are being made about where children will live in the future.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the importance of understanding who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example through undertaking life story work or other direct work. Staff in children's homes should play a full role in work of this kind. As a minimum, staff should provide children with memories of their time living at the home, using photos and other creative ways to help children have an accurate narrative about their time living at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.4)
- The registered person should ensure that each child has their own personal space. Children should be able to personalise their bedrooms in a way that represents their individuality. The registered provider's policy on how children can arrange their rooms should not prevent a child from designing it in a way that helps them feel more at home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.18)
- The registered person should ensure that as set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. In particular, the registered person should ensure that reflective conversations about the needs of children are an established part of staff supervision. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2594539

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual: Paul O'Neill

Registered manager: Michael Wren

Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

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