

SC359818

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a large organisation and provides care for up to four young people. It is situated in a busy, multicultural and ethnically diverse suburb.

The statement of purpose indicates that staff provide young people with structure, boundaries, care and support, and that staff help young people to prepare for the next step in their lives, whether it is a return home, a move to another placement or the transition to independence.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 1 October 2019 and is currently undertaking her level 5 qualification.

Visit dates: 21 to 23 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 21 February 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Sustained effectiveness

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

Staff are good at ensuring that children receive care and support that responds to their individual needs. Staff enjoy spending time with children. This has helped children to develop positive relationships with staff. A child told an inspector that they have fun with staff and feel able to talk to them about any worries they may have.

Proactive staff support children in their education throughout this period of COVID-19 restrictions. Staff have engaged children in home tutoring and online learning. Staff have sent clear messages to children that education is important, and have worked with other professionals to gain the right support for them. As a result, children have continued to engage in their learning.

Staff continue to work with children to help ensure that their health needs are met. This includes working with child and adolescent mental health services. Good partnership working and information sharing have enabled a child to get the right support.

During the national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff inspired children to learn new skills and try new activities. For example, children have started to grow plants, taken part in cycling and made good use of the home's paddling pool. As restrictions have eased, children continue to ride their bikes, enjoy pampering evenings and are making plans for Halloween activities. These activities allow children to build on their positive childhood memories.

Staff understand the importance of children staying in touch with loved ones, where appropriate. A parent commented on how pleased she was with the communication from staff, and how they had 'gone the extra mile' for her daughter.

One child's placement at the home was ended after the necessary information sharing did not take place before the point of admission. Senior managers shared their concerns with the placing local authority about this and put in measures to help prevent this happening again. As a result, a child who has recently moved into the home has had a positive, well-planned experience of moving into the home and is thriving as a result.

The safety of children

Despite some significant challenges from children, staff deal with incidents appropriately. This helps to ensure children's safety.

Children are listened to and their concerns taken seriously. For example, on occasions, children have made allegations against staff. These have been appropriately shared with the social worker, designated officer and Ofsted. Measures have been put in place to keep children safe while investigations are carried out.

Staff have helped children to understand how to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have held discussions to help address any anxieties that children may have. Furthermore, children's questions about wider media coverage have been answered, around topics such as diversity. Consequently, children have felt engaged and informed.

Despite limitations of face-to-face training during the pandemic, staff have continued to benefit from training from the in-house clinical team. This has helped staff to further understand and manage children's behaviours.

Leaders and managers

Professionals report that the manager goes 'above and beyond'. She is clearly passionate about the children in her care.

The home has a core team of regular staff, who provide consistent care for children. Staff have worked overtime to cover holidays. This means that there has been no need for the use of agency staff in the home.

The independent visitor continues to monitor the progress and well-being of the children each month. Visits at the height of lockdown were carried out remotely. As the restrictions have relaxed, the independent visitor has returned to on-site visits. Children can always share their views with the visitor and any recommendations raised have been dealt with quickly.

Staff have reflected that there have been some challenging times in the home. They have felt motivated and supported by managers and each other. However, although staff receive regular supervision, the quality of them and the supervision records could be enhanced to further staff development.

The recommendations raised at the last inspection have been met. For example, the home is homely and welcoming, staff have taken effective action to minimise the impact of children's behaviours on each other, and staff now set clear expectations about the amount of time children can play on game consoles.

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

Recommendations

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with

regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

This specifically relates to improving the quality of the supervision to further enhance staff development.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC359818

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Jolanda Brookes

Registered manager: Shabreanjit Kaur

Inspectors

Louise Battersby, Social Care Inspector
Shazana Jamal, Social Care 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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