

SC359846

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to care for up to five children with complex needs. It is owned by a large organisation.

The registered manager was registered in August 2022. She has the required qualifications for the role.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/06/2021	Full	Good
09/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/05/2019	Full	Inadequate
07/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Four children live in the home. They have moved in to the home since the last inspection. Four children have moved out. Three of the children moved prior to the current manager's employment.

The home is not a homely environment for children. Furniture has been broken and the sofas have been drawn on. Additionally, children have caused damage to wardrobes, walls and the garden fence, which require repairs. The paint work needs a refresh, some of the kitchen cupboards are ill fitting, and the downstairs toilet does not always flush well.

Children's bedrooms are personalised to their individual preferences. Children have door alarms on their bedroom doors. However, managers have not completed a rigorous assessment of children's needs to support the requirement for this measure. The alarms cannot be isolated to singular bedrooms. As a result, the alarms have been used unnecessarily for some children, which further impacts on a homely environment.

Children in the home do not always get on well. Children told the inspector that some children will 'kick off' and this impacts negatively on the homely feel. As a result of children not getting along, sometimes they hurt each other. While staff do implement boundaries and structure to try and avoid this, there are frequent challenging behaviours that impact negatively on all children and the environment. Bullying is addressed in children's discussions as an ongoing topic to help children to understand acceptable behaviours.

Children recognise the progress that they have made since living in the home. They said that they have 'matured' because of staff helping them to manage their emotions, and their independence has increased. One child put forward a suggestion to staff that they are responsible enough to care for a pet. As a result, they have a pet hamster that they are taking good care of.

Staff support children's physical and mental health needs. Children attend relevant health appointments; staff understand children's medications and the impact that they have on them. Children are referred to specialist health teams to meet their individual needs.

All children attend school. Staff have successfully advocated for one child to move to a school that is closer to the home in line with the child's wishes. Other children have continued to attend schools that they were enrolled in before moving to the home. Consequently, this has provided children with stability. Children are making good progress from their starting points, and their attendance has increased.

Educational professionals have said that children are making good progress since moving to the home and they are well presented for school.

Staff support children to attend activities. These include fun days out, swimming lessons, youth clubs, going to the local park, and having time on their scooters. Staff capture these memories in photographs to help to support children to understand their journey and recall memories.

Children see people who are important to them. Staff help children to remain in contact with family members despite the significant distance for some children. Children's identity is supported through returning to their hometowns. This has also meant that family time has been easier for parents to attend. Consequently, family links are maintained.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children rarely go missing. When they do, staff respond appropriately. They follow guidance and protocols, look for children and inform relevant people. Children return home after a short time and are welcomed back. Children have independent return-home interviews to further understand their needs.

There has been a serious incident regarding an allegation of harm between two children. The manager took appropriate steps to work with the relevant professionals and staff to implement safeguarding measures. However, a lack of staff supervision was a contributory factor to the incident and staff did not immediately inform managers that an incident had occurred. As a result, there was a delay in informing the relevant professionals in a speedy manner. The manager has since worked with staff to ensure that they understand procedures to follow when safeguarding concerns arise.

When staff practice has fallen short of expected standards, the manager has been quick to address this and share information with the relevant professionals. Investigations are completed and staff and children are safeguarded throughout the process. When staff have been absent due to investigations, on their return they are supported to talk with children to help to repair their relationships.

Staff support children with educational work to help to keep them safe. However, due to the varying staff experience and skill set, these differ in quality. For example, work with one child regarding internet safety was in-depth and of good quality. However, work regarding a child experimenting with alcohol offered no educational value to help to keep them safe.

Staff do not always ensure that children are safe from avoidable hazards. During the inspection, a light switch was broken and wires were exposed. This had the potential to cause harm to children and staff. The manager ensured that the light switch was replaced during the inspection.

Restraint is only used as a last resort to safeguard children. Children are spoken with after and helped to consider alternative techniques to avoid behaviours escalating. Staff debriefs take place to review the measure and learning. However, there has been one instance where a staff debrief was not recorded in line with required record-keeping. As the registered manager was involved in the restraint, a senior manager was due to complete the debrief. The debrief produced for this restraint had been recorded on the day of the inspection, despite the restraint happening several months ago.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager is ambitious for the home and children. She knows children well and recognises their starting points and the progress that they have made. She understands how their experiences have impacted them. She has strong relationships with children and, when they return from school, they are keen to greet her and tell her about their day.

The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. She is open about the journey that the home has been on since she became the manager. A new staff team has been employed, and she is working on embedding practices and the ethos of the home. She recognises the impact of this on the functioning of the home and the quality of care that children receive, and has reflected this in her biannual review of the home.

Due to the limited experience and skills of the staff, they are unable to deliver specific support programmes as detailed in the statement of purpose. Consequently, this is not a true reflection of the care that children currently receive. The manager plans to implement this within the next 12 months.

Staff and children told the inspector that the 'matching of children in the home is not good'. They feel that the behaviours of some children are influenced by each other and this has a negative impact on the home. Two of the four children living in the home moved in to the home within a very short space of time. Consequently, children and staff have not had ample time to adjust to new children before another has moved in. The manager and the responsible individual are reflective of the relationship dynamics of children. They do not plan to move another child in to the home for some time, while they work on improving the relationships of children already living in the home.

Staff have not received training to support one child's specific needs. The manager is in the process of organising this. However, this is a significant delay as the child has lived in the home for more than one year.

When appointing new staff, the registered manager has not consistently followed safe recruitment practice. For example, no overseas checks or verifications have been undertaken for one staff member who worked with children overseas. This has the potential to compromise safeguarding measures when recruiting new staff. The

manager was quick to respond and start the process of addressing this shortfall during the inspection.

The manager has not had sufficient oversight of records to ensure that they are always accurate. For example, children's records do not always state their ethnicity correctly, and there are discrepancies in children's plans that have the potential to impact on the time frame in which staff respond to children's needs.

Professionals spoke positively of the care that children receive from staff. They said that staff are 'child centred', 'supportive', 'committed to making sure that [children] are safe', they 'advocate' for children, and provide them with 'stability'.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(vii)(c)(i)) This specifically relates to ensuring a homey environment for all children, including good-quality repairs and maintenance.	23 March 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.	23 March 2023

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(iv)(xi))	
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— manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. 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)(iv)(v)(vii)(b)) This specifically relates to the serious incident between two children. Staff should ensure that there is appropriate supervision of children and follow internal policies when safeguarding concerns arise.	23 March 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.	23 March 2023

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to staff receiving training to help them to care for children and understand their specific and individual needs.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and 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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) This specifically relates to ensuring that managers take into consideration the impact that moving children in to the home quickly may have on children already living in the home. Ensure that the staffing experience and skills are also considered when increasing the number of children that they will need to care for and meeting their individual needs.	23 March 2023
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b)) This specifically refers to ensuring that information regarding specific models of working with children are revised when the staff are not trained/experienced, to ensure that this is being practised and the practice is embedded.	23 March 2023

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This specifically refers to ensuring that overseas checks are completed where appropriate.	23 March 2023
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Recommendations

- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. This specifically relates to ensuring that all staff debriefs are recorded. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC359846

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane,
Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Jolanda Brookes

Registered manager: Shabreanjit Kaur

Inspector

Jodie Lewis, Social Care Inspector

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