

SC359846

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a group of homes operated by the same organisation. The home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

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

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: 31 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not judged

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because

- Many young people do not live here very long and aims of their placement are not fulfilled.
- Some young people have to leave sooner than originally planned because staff cannot prevent them from negatively influencing one another.
- Some young people have a poor experience of moving into, and out of, the home.
- Some staff do not build warm constructive relationships with young people.
- Some young people do not attend or receive any education.
- Staff rarely use written records in ways that help young people to develop and improve themselves.
- Staff do not share and embed successful care and behaviour management strategies throughout the staff team.
- Some staff routinely lock young people out of downstairs rooms.
- An independent visitor does not always see young people after they have been missing.
- Managers do not know whether consequences like fines actually stop young people from damaging and breaking things.
- The manager does not analyse staff turnover, young people's incidents, placement breakdowns and complaints to find out where improvements are needed.

The children's home's strengths

- Young people trust those staff who naturally show them good care.
- Some young people's behaviour has improved and they feel more secure.
- Most staff use a nurturing approach combined with good mealtime routines when everyone talks and eats together.
- Most staff are good at encouraging young people to attend appointments and take responsibility for themselves.
- Staff use de-escalation skills, and this means that physical restraint is not often necessary.
- The manager is energetic and determined, and networks well with parents and social workers.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2017	Interim	Not judged
03/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
27/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/06/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) and (2)(a)(viii))	30/09/2017
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate. (Regulation 13 (1) and (2)(b)) This is with particular reference to effective sharing of creative and successful care and behaviour management strategies and skilful, empathic leadership from all staff that lead shifts.	30/09/2017
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)) This is with particular reference to manager analysis of whether imposed negative consequences, such as fines, actually help young people to stop breaking and damaging the home and the things in it.	30/09/2017
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any	30/09/2017

investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))

This is with particular reference to noting in a timely way all the actions that are taken, so that complaints are well managed, overseen and completed in a timely way.

Recommendations

- Ensure that expectations of standards of behaviour are high for all staff and children in the home. These standards should be clear and unambiguous. Children should be supported to develop understanding and empathy towards each other. Positive behaviour and relationships should be reinforced, praised and encouraged; poor behaviour should be challenged and discussed. The development of safe, stable and secure relationships with staff in the home should be central to the ethos of the home and support the development of secure attachments that, where appropriate, persist over time. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- Ensure that all staff have the capacity and competence to build constructive, warm relationships with children that actively promote positive behaviour and provide the foundations for managing any negative behaviour. Staff should have the skills to respond to each child's individual behaviour. Where necessary they should manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.14)
- Ensure that the registered person only accepts placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- Ensure that there are procedures in place for welcoming and introducing each child to the home, and that they are sensitive to the needs of the child at the time of arrival. A warm welcome and introduction to the home is an entitlement for all children whether they are admitted in a planned way or in an emergency. Where possible other children and young people should be supported to contribute to the design of the welcome and introduction and where appropriate the welcome itself. The home has a key role in helping children to understand why they are living there and the plans for their future. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.7)
- Ensure that as well as longer-term support for children to move on from the home effectively (Regulation 6(2)(b)(vi)), the home has an important role in

supporting each child leaving the home in the period immediately before their departure. The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)

- Ensure that children are supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- Ensure that just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (Regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10) This is with particular respect to locking downstairs communal rooms.
- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Ensure that the registered person monitors and reviews the patterns and trends of turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, and is able to understand and where possible, address any negative trends. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.19)
- Ensure that the registered person makes best use of information from internal monitoring (including under regulation 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Inspection judgements

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

Ten young people have lived here since February 2107. Two young people still live here, but none of them has stayed longer than five months. Many young people arrive on an emergency basis. Staff do not ensure that all young people receive a good welcome. Staff do not prepare and include existing young people enough in helping new arrivals feel welcome.

Some staff give young people good support and nurture. One member of staff said, 'I give them the attention, show them that I want to care. They want me to come into the room and laugh with them about the thing that they are watching. I explain the things I want them to know. I say the detail and I talk about the purpose at the end.' However, other staff are less creative and spend more time in the office rather than with young people.

Young people do not always receive enough help to make sharing, positive links with other young people. Instead, they involve one another in unsafe, destructive behaviour. As a result, a number of young people are moved out in a hurry. Staff do not make a real difference to their unsafe behaviour. One social worker said, 'The home is not right for [young person]. He needs a smaller placement.' The home's monthly visitor said about another young person, 'The home could not meet her needs.'

A number of young people do not have preparation for their moves or a chance to say 'Goodbye'. One young person was told that she was being taken to another home while she was in the car to go shopping. Staff said that a few young people have refused to get out of the car at their new placement because they have not wanted to go and they had no time to adjust. Overall, transitions are not well managed, and many young people leave here without good preparation for their future.

Some young people make visible personal progress. For example, they develop better routines of going to college. They keep the appointments that they need to go to. They talk to professionals more. They feel able to confide in some staff about their feelings and situation. However, one young person said that there is no point getting close to staff because she knows that she is not staying long.

One young person has not received any formal education in the five months that he has lived here. He is still unable to mix positively with other young people or come out of his room when there are visitors or workmen at the home. However, his social worker said, 'He is saying that he is happy and does not want to move.'

He has a good relationship with the manager. Staff give him time and space to offload. He likes everything to be clear and open – I think that they *are* clear.'

Other young people, whose placements have ended following crises, have also been unable to engage. This is because staff do not work consistently enough as a team. They do not all have high aspirations for what young people can achieve. They are not all able to create a positive daily routine or give consistently warm responses.

Some staff do listen carefully to young people and earn their trust and confidence to engage. For example, these staff make young people a picnic supper, exactly as they like it. They place notes under the bedroom doors, saying that supper is ready and waiting in the fridge downstairs. One young person calls this 'my special drink and magic sandwiches.' He said to one member of staff, 'This trust thing is great.' However, some staff lock all the downstairs rooms routinely and make young people knock on the office door and wait if they want something to eat or drink. Overall, the quality of young people's day-to-day experiences varies because the quality of staff's care varies.

A member of staff said that young people find their written records 'a source of anxiety'. Young people do not get involved in reading or signing many of the records that are kept about them, but they do wonder what the records say and how they are being used. Young people do not receive copies of any written records to keep. Staff do not collect memorabilia for young people or encourage them to see the benefits of this. In addition, the time that staff spend recording reduces the quality time that they have available to spend with young people. Young people are alone in their bedrooms for long periods. They cannot look back at notes of advice that they have been given or photos of fun times that they have had while living here.

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

Over the last six months, different groups of three or four male and female young people who have complex needs have lived together. They have not always been well protected. Staff and the manager have not always matched young people with sufficient understanding and skill. Staff have not been able to prevent incidents of damage, self-harm and sexual activity in the home. The manager said that staff are reminded to 'challenge, distract and limit group activity'. Despite this, staff have called police for help, and there have also been numerous incidents of young people going missing, and concerns about drug misuse.

Staff have not made an impact on the underlying difficulties that cause young people to show manipulative and controlling behaviour. Most young people only stay in placement for a few months. Young people have experienced many staff changes. Young people have not had the benefit of secure attachments with staff

that are likely to carry on after they leave. Social workers and young people have complained about the disrespectful attitude of some staff. Staff have not always arranged for young people to be seen by an independent visitor after a missing episode. The manager has brought a number of young people's placements to an end because she has not been able to keep all young people safe. A member of staff said, 'It seems that when something goes wrong, then they get moved.'

Staff have not used physical intervention on any young people since the last inspection. They are convinced that not using physical intervention helps young people to feel safe. Young people who used to attack staff and young people, when they were in previous placements, have not done so here. Since other young people have moved out, the male young person is calming more quickly after an outburst and is doing less damage. The other young person has not failed any of the drugs tests that she has agreed to. However, staff and the manager are now unsure whether they can accept any new young people without jeopardising the improved behaviour of these young people.

One member of staff said, 'I like [young person] to feel safe and secure. If I can say things and do things which do that, I will.' Many staff are patient, kind and positive in their behaviour management style. However, some staff placed in charge of shifts do not practise in this way, causing young people to experience tension and inconsistency. For example, one young person told a member of staff that if he had known that she was on shift, they would not have gone missing, but would have stayed in and watched a film with her. This staff member said, 'There was a behaviour management plan, but whatever it was, it was not working right.'

Similarly, young people experience inconsistent responses following unwanted behaviour incidents. For example, some staff issue monetary fines for damage that young people have caused. The manager does not spend time working out whether such sanctions work. She does not make sure that all staff use the behaviour management strategies that are most likely to work for individual young people.

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

A new manager was registered in July 2017. She is experienced in working with this organisation. She worked in this home as deputy manager from October 2016 to January 2017 before becoming manager. She is energetic and has high aspirations for what young people can achieve. Social workers said that she communicates well with them. However, this is her first registered manager position. She has not had a deputy manager since starting in the role, except for during a six-week period. Neither has she had three permanent seniors. This holds back the provision of consistently good-quality care and oversight.

The manager said, 'A significant amount of safeguarding concerns/issues have

arisen in this period. This has resulted in the staff team being unable to effectively sustain any stability within the home. We have had to move young people on from our care due to high-risk complex needs, such as child sexual exploitation and missing from care.' The manager said that placement failures are 'strongly linked to the location of the home and the surrounding area'. However, she has not robustly reviewed admissions, discharges and staff practice well enough. She has not analysed complaints about care practice. She has not talked to social workers when young people's placements have failed or when the social workers have complained. She has not looked for patterns and trends regarding staff turnover and staff practice. As a result, she has not identified the reasons for young people's poor progress and experience.

The manager is undertaking a qualification in the leadership and management of children and young people's residential care. She and senior staff have access to a good-quality internal leadership training programme, which includes sessions on working together and creating a positive childcare culture. However, the manager knows that some staff continue to practise in ways that prevent young people from receiving consistently positive care.

Young people respond best to some new staff who are energetic, compassionate and creative in the care that they give to young people. The manager knows this, but is not effectively tackling inconsistency, difficulties with teamwork, carer fatigue and institutional care styles from some shift leaders. For example, she did not know until recently that some staff were continuing to lock all downstairs internal doors. She did not think that any staff were overtired or concerned about maintaining the pace. (One member of staff said, 'There is a lot of overtime going and you could just kill yourself off. I would not want to lose the passion for the job due to exhaustion.') The manager has not yet developed ways of communicating that give all staff clear guidance about their practice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Cambian Group, 4th Floor Waterfront Building,
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Responsible individual: Alison Blyth-Bishop

Registered manager: Samantha Maullin

Inspector

Rachel Britten, social care inspector

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