

SC436372

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large national provider. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

Four children currently live at the home. They were spoken to and had their views considered.

The registered manager and responsible individual were both present throughout this inspection.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 2025

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: 30 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/11/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/08/2022	Full	Good
24/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the previous inspection, one child has moved into the home. The child's needs have been challenging for the relatively inexperienced staff team to meet. There have been incidents between the children, at times, having a significant impact on their well-being. The manager and staff have worked with resilience, commitment and learning in supporting all the children.

The manager and staff have listened to children's voices during this period and after incidents. The manager has identified that the child requires more specialised support. The staff are carefully planning for a move that will better meet the child's needs. This is something that the child agrees with. Children have been impacted by the incidents in the home and will need reassurance around the planning of future admissions to the home.

Children are all enrolled in full-time education and most of them attend regularly. Where children are not attending school or have been excluded, the staff have plans in place to support them. Communication with schools is effective. Children receive support that is consistent between home and school. Staff provide good advocacy for children with additional needs, ensuring they have specialist education plans in place.

Despite some of the incidents, children are making progress with their health and well-being. Staff provide consistent and genuine care. Children's happiness is focused on by staff. Where children need specialist health support, this is advocated for by the staff. The staff provide an environment for that intervention to be effective.

Children have been supported to build meaningful relationships with the staff and with friends outside of the home. Children see each other as siblings in the home. One professional said, 'When you talk to [name of child], he says "my home"'.

Staff support children to access clubs and activities they enjoy. This is improving children's confidence and self-esteem. Families are an important part of some of the children's lives, and they spend time with them regularly. Family members work closely with the staff team to improve children's outcomes.

The home is a large property, and maintenance can be an issue for the provider. However, the registered manager and the team have made significant improvements, and it feels like a busy family home. Rooms have been newly decorated and furnished, and additional spaces were being refurbished at the time of the inspection. Children's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their characters and interests. Children are involved in decorating their private spaces. One child said, 'The manager has made this feel more like a home; it now feels less institutionalised.'

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

Staff have improved their practice and understanding of one child's needs. This has reduced the impact of incidents on the other children. The manager has implemented a culture of reflection and learning after incidents. This feeds into group safety plans in the home being more effective. Staff know children's behaviour support plans. This often prevents incidents from escalating to the point of children being harmed.

There have been incidents of children being restrained. Restraint is used as a last resort and is often a low-level intervention to keep children safe. The manager provides in-depth oversight to incidents of restraint. Staff and children receive quality debriefs after incidents. The manager uses these processes to improve practice and ensure that children's feelings and experiences are considered.

Children know how to make a complaint and receive support when they wish to do so. The manager listens to complaints from children and ensures that steps are followed in appropriate timescales. A child said that they felt their complaint was responded to well by the manager and that things had improved since then.

There is an effective safety plan in place in relation to the area that the home is situated. Local risks are continually reviewed by the manager. Children's individual needs are also under constant review to assess what support they require in accessing the community. Staff have positive relationships with local police who visit the home. One child has presented with some online risks. The staff have ensured that the right teams within the police have become involved to support the child.

The checks that staff require before they can work in the home have not always been thorough. The manager has not assured themselves that checks carried out by a third party in the organisation were satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced and committed manager. Since the last inspection, the manager has registered with Ofsted. The manager knows the strengths of the home and is clear what the areas for development are. A new deputy manager has been appointed, and along with team leaders, this has improved the structure of the team in the home.

Apart from the manager, the staff team has completely changed since the last inspection. The team is still developing its skills and experience. The manager has improved the culture in the home and has high expectations of the staff. The manager is ensuring that staff are accountable for their practice, and this approach is welcomed by the team. The manager's commitment to improvement has been central to improvements in the care children receive.

Staff now receive regular and effective supervision from the managers and team leaders. The manager's senior staff have undergone training to ensure they provide effective supervision and guidance. Staff report that they love the sessions. Team meetings are regular and effective. There is additional clinical support from a psychologist attached to the home. Staff access this as a group once a month but can also use the support in one-to-one sessions.

Professionals were spoken to during the inspection. They say that the home is providing good care to children. Professionals say that communication with the staff team is effective. They said that multi-agency work is a strong characteristic of the team. One social worker said, 'They have done amazingly, and it has been really challenging.'

The manager has improved the quality assurance and monitoring of the home. The systems in place are consistent and effective. The reflection and review in audits and checks are contributing to improving practice and better outcomes for children. The opportunity for anonymous feedback to be collected was missed at a time when the home was experiencing different and significant challenges. This minimised opportunities for further learning and reflection by leaders and managers.

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, The 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 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))	31 July 2025
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))	30 June 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. This also includes ensuring that the point-in-time surveys are distributed to all relevant people so they have the opportunity to provide feedback. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: SC436372

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Chelsea Hickinbotham

Inspector

Chris Haines, Social Care Inspector

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