

SC456910

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered for up to two children. It is owned and operated by a national provider of children's services. The home looks after children who may display complex emotional and behavioural needs and/or a learning disability.

Visit dates: 17 to 18 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 25 June 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

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

The home has experienced a turbulent period during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of five children have been admitted to the home and three have left. Not all children that have left the home have done so in a planned way, although one has returned home to their family and is doing well. Another child who lived in the home for more than three years, also moved home to family during lockdown. This was the positive outcome of an extensive and collaborative piece of work with the local authority.

Children who currently live in the home have only recently arrived. They are settling well. Leaders and managers made careful and considered decisions around children's assessment and admission to the home. Leaders and managers appreciate the importance of thoroughly assessing children, including detailed impact risk assessments. Reflective practice has led to lessons being learned about what went well and what could have gone better during May, June and July. This has been in respect of how staff responded to children's complex and destructive behaviour and what contributed to them needing to leave the home.

The home is comfortable and homely. An extensive programme of redecoration and refurbishment has addressed previous damage, and children enjoy attractive internal and external space.

Excellent focus is being given to help children to develop trusted and secure relationships with the adults caring for them. A relative of a child currently living at the home said that she was very impressed with the home, particularly the quality of relationships being established and the progress that her grandson was already making.

The safety of children

Leaders, managers and staff respond appropriately to risks that children present. Decisions are child centred, and there is good evidence of effective partnership working that focuses on keeping children safe.

There have been 21 occasions when children have gone missing from home since April 2020. Staff followed correct procedures and made earnest attempts to encourage children to return home. On each occasion that children were missing, they were offered the opportunity to speak to an independent person on their return. Children did not always take this opportunity, despite staff encouraging them to do so. Current children have not gone missing from the home and are assessed as being low risk of doing so.

Other serious incidents also occurred involving children who previously lived at the home, including extensive damage to the home.

Two children made allegations about staff and correct procedures were followed by reporting these to the local authority designated officer, who has commended

leaders and managers on their open and transparent practice and willingness to reflect and learn lessons.

Physical restraints are rarely used, and none have taken place since April 2020. Staff focus on providing clear and consistent boundaries, incentives and rewards. Sanctions are rarely used. When they are, staff struggle to identify what would be a meaningful and appropriate response to children's behaviour, and, when reviewed, the manager has overturned them on two occasions. The use of sanctions continues to be a work in progress to ensure good, effective practices place the child's needs and development at the centre of decision-making.

Staff have supported children to understand the pandemic more fully and how they can stay safe and healthy.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is suitably qualified and has a wealth of experience. She was absent from the home for four weeks recently and the responsible individual made suitable arrangements for the day-to-day management of the home.

The deputy manager is also absent from the home and, to help cover her absence, a member of the team has been temporarily promoted to a team leader. The registered manager and responsible individual are monitoring the situation.

Leaders and managers acknowledge that the home has experienced a difficult few months since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have reflected a great deal and have worked hard to settle the home. They have praised the resilience of the staff team. Current children are settling well and the whole team has high aspirations for them.

The requirements made at the last inspection have been met.

No requirements or recommendations are made following this visit.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC456910

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare LTD

Registered provider address: Cambian Child Care LTD, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Nicola McClements

Registered manager: Beverley Goode

Inspector

Norma Welsby, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020