

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC457266
Inspector	Norma Welsby
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Cambian Childcare Limited
Registered person address	Pinnacle House 2 Oakwood Square, Cheadle Royal Business Park CHEADLE Cheshire SK8 3SB
Responsible individual	Sharon Michelle Edney
Registered manager	Victoria Medlin
Date of last inspection	05/03/2014

Inspection date	03/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private national service provider and is registered to care for up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2014	Interim	good progress
25/04/2013	Full	good

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that there are clear arrangements for staff to deputise in the registered person's absence. In particular, that the senior staffing arrangements in the home are formalised (NMS 17.4)
- Ensure that the staff group who are in day-to-day contact with children includes staff of both genders whenever possible. In particular, every effort should be made to employ permanent male staff to achieve continuity so that young people's attachments are not overly disrupted (NMS 17.8 & 17.10)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

This home achieves outstanding outcomes for young people. Staff are highly skilled and motivated to enable young people to make excellent progress while living in this home. Young people receive highly personalised care that is achieved through staff securing a wide range of specialist services that meets their needs. A particular strength of the home is that staff look ahead beyond the young person's placement. Because of this, young people benefit from having appropriate support in place after they leave and having staff who know them well being involved in helping to plan for their futures.

Young people enjoy stable placements. The Registered Manager gives very thorough attention to managing the admission of a new young person to the home. In this way, the progress existing young people are making is not significantly affected. This is because great care is taken to assess compatibility and plan how to manage any likely impact. Young people also benefit from staff showing unconditional support. Staff understand young people's backgrounds and work exceptionally hard to build trust and positive attachments. While young people know that reasonable boundaries and clear expectations are in place, they benefit from learning that staff will stick by them and support them through difficult personal times. These practices help young people develop a more positive self-view and emotional resilience.

There is a very positive and enthusiastic approach to young people's education. Young people benefit from staff valuing education and being aspirational for young people. Staff are very mindful of young people's difficulties. They advocate on behalf of young people exceptionally well to secure appropriate and diverse learning opportunities. Young people also benefit from really effective communication between their home and school. This holistic approach, achieved by working together in this way, means that young people receive a more personalised education. This improves their options in the future, as they make choices about further education or securing employment.

Staff provide very nurturing care. They understand the importance of young people feeling secure and valued. Young people benefit from receiving highly personalised support that meets their diverse and changing needs. Relationships between staff and young people are excellent. As a result of this, young people grow in confidence. They learn to manage difficult situations, make mature decisions and feel confident about themselves. Young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. They learn to appreciate nutritious meals that staff cook for them as well as developing their own cooking skills. Young people are also guided to make positive choices about risk taking activities and staff arrange for them to have specialist advice. Young people have access to an excellent range of health care that meets their physical, emotional and psychological needs. A particular strength of this home

is the benefit young people have as a result of staff building exceptionally effective partnerships with external agencies and being tireless in their pursuit of specialist assessments and treatment.

Young people have a wide range of opportunities to enable them to develop appropriate life skills. A very individual approach is taken and good attention is also given to recognising the competing pressures that young people may be facing. This means that staff willingly step-in to support young people at times when they would struggle, such as feeling unwell or preparing for exams.

Quality of care

outstanding

This home provides a very child-centred and nurturing environment. In every sense, young people are central to its day to day functioning and future development. For example, young people are involved in choosing how communal rooms are used, decorating the home for Christmas and choosing which places of interest they want to visit. The home's development plan includes young people's targets, which ensures the needs and interest of young people are part of the home's improvement agenda.

The Registered Manager leads by example. She is highly motivated and committed to providing the best possible care to young people. Staff speak very highly of her and are equally motivated. As a team, they share high aspirations, effectively challenge barriers and celebrate young people's achievement. They advocate well for young people, understanding their vulnerabilities and securing specialist support that will improve their prospects for the future.

Staff build exceptionally positive relationships with young people. They listen to their views and wishes and respond as good parents would. Young people know how to complain and trust staff to act appropriately. Staff provide consistent approaches so young people are clear about expectations. When difficult situations arise, these are managed with young people's best interests in mind. For example, tremendous efforts are made to ensure young people are not criminalised. Also, if young people do not keep to agreements and choose to have time away from the home that has not been specifically authorised, staff make telephone calls and directly check on their welfare. While young people may feel annoyed that this happens, they know that staff do this to ensure their safety. Follow up discussions helps young people to more fully understand why staff act in this way and leads to a reduction of such incidents.

Young people are provided with a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Some of these are based within the home, such as cooking or playing football in the large garden. Others are community based activities that support known interests as well as exciting opportunities to visit national attractions, such as football stadiums and theme parks. There is also good recognition of the importance of young people spending time with friends and family and staff support these arrangements well.

Where young people have experienced breakdowns in relationships, staff support them exceptionally well to reflect and repair these relationships. These experiences are very positive for young people and give them skills that will be important to them throughout their lives.

Staff effectively identify and meet needs relating to the personal identity of young people. These may relate to cultural backgrounds or specific personal interests that are important to the young person. Staff support young people, by ensuring their needs are met and by celebrating important events and their achievements.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Young people have a strong sense of their own safety and well-being. Staff recognise the individual vulnerabilities relating to diverse needs and take effective action to put safeguards in place. An outstanding feature of this home is the way in which the manager and staff liaise exceptionally well with external agencies, including social work services and police, to support and promote young people's safety and well-being.

The staff are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. They receive good training and meet regularly to discuss the welfare of the young people. Detailed risk assessments and management strategies are in place, while allowing young people opportunities to grow and develop. All allegations and concerns are referred promptly and all necessary action taken to protect young people.

A very positive approach is taken to managing behaviour, which is fully understood in the context of the young persons' life experiences. For example, staff have a really good understanding of how insecure attachment affects young people's emotional responses and behaviour. Even when staff have been faced with particularly threatening situations, they have acted in the best interests of the young person. For example, they have changed staffing to diffuse a situation, they have provided additional staffing to support young people, they have secured specialist health assessments and they have avoided criminalisation of the young person. These practices protect young people and support their futures.

The home operates a number of incentives for young people, including some that young people have suggested. A formal approach to consequences is also used, with positive consequences outweighing any negative ones. Where sanctions are applied, they are fair and relevant. Staff are also very skilled and effective in de-escalating behaviour when incidents occur. In nearly two years, there have been three restraints. These have occurred recently due to particularly heightened situations. The manager effectively monitors the use and incidents of restraint to ensure that staff have acted appropriately. Recently too, the manager arranged for all staff to have additional bespoke training to ensure that they were responding to current challenges in the most effective way possible. Young people rarely go missing from

this home. Staff are clear what to do should this happen as agreed arrangements are in place with social work services and the police. Sometimes young people do not keep to agreements and stay out with friends or family. Staff take appropriate action to check they are safe and work with young people to meet their needs and raise their understanding of why specific boundaries are in place.

Staff recruitment procedures are thorough. Visitors to the home are also vetted and monitored. The environment is well maintained and safe. Regular checks and servicing is in place. Staff and young people regularly participate in fire safety drills. A fire risk assessment and a location risk assessment are in place.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager of this home is highly motivated and committed to providing the best possible service to young people. Without exception, young people, staff and external professionals speak very highly of her skills as a manager and the way in which she champions the rights of young people. She has a therapeutic counselling background and is currently part way through a Diploma Level 5 qualification in the management and care of young people.

Good staffing levels are in place. These have been improved recently to respond to changing needs. The current core staff team is entirely female. While male staff have been drafted in to make up the additional staffing requirements, these arrangements are not yet formalised. This is important to address so that young people are consistently supported by staff of both genders and so that their attachments are not overly disrupted. Also, recent necessary temporary changes to the staff team have meant that there are no senior staff, other than the manager working at the home. The impact of this has been minimal, due to many of the core team being highly experienced and suitably qualified. The company is currently looking at the possibility of increasing the number of senior staff throughout all its children's homes to ensure that a senior member of staff is on duty on every shift.

Staff feel well supported and enjoy working at this home. They benefit from regular supervision and team meetings, annual appraisal and on-going training opportunities. Young people are consulted and contribute to annual appraisals. Staff are either qualified to NVQ 3/Diploma 3 or are undertaking these qualifications. Some staff also have a relevant degree or are studying at degree level through the Open University.

The manager and staff keep themselves up to date with changing legislation and inspection standards. They have high expectations about sustaining improvement and the manager undertakes an internal assessment to gauge how well the home is likely to do when inspected. This exercise informs future developments. It also confirms the progress young people are making and evidences the difference the home has made. Monitoring processes are regularly undertaken. These are rigorous and the home takes prompt action to address any shortfalls. The company is

currently reviewing its arrangements for independent monitoring visits and hopes to improve these further.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.