

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	7 July 2016
Unique reference number	SC457272
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Cambian Childcare Ltd
Registered provider address	4th Floor, Waterfront, Hammersmith Embankment, London W6 9RU

Responsible individual	Robert Poots
Registered manager	Sharon Colley
Inspector	Jane Partridge

Inspection date	7 July 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC457272

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children make progress and their outcomes improve as a result of living at this home.
- Children are comfortable. They have good relationships with staff and consider that this is their home.
- The consistent staff team builds trusting and sustaining relationships with children. Staff genuinely care about their welfare and work in their best interests.
- Staff support learning and children have made momentous educational progress.
- Children are valued. They gain confidence, and they learn to regulate and manage their emotions.
- Negative and anti-social behaviours are considerably reduced or cease.
- Managers and staff work together as part of the professional team to deliver individualised care to children.
- The inspection also identified the following shortfalls. One recommendation from the interim inspection has not progressed, meaning that staff on probation do not receive supervision in line with organisational policy. Staff have not been trained in issues of loss and bereavement. This links directly to understanding the needs of a child in placement. Finally, while the home is presented in better order, some work remains.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home provides a homely, domestic environment, with specific regard to meeting the home's ongoing refurbishment and decoration plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that staff access appropriate resources to support their training needs, specifically loss and bereavement training. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- Ensure that supervision for staff on probation is delivered in line with organisational policy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private organisation owns and operates this home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10 February 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24 September 2015	Full	Requires improvement
23 March 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17 September 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff recognise the likely emotional impact that entering residential care may have on children. From admission, they successfully engage children, taking things at the child's pace, and positive relationships begin to form. Children appear relaxed in the company of staff. One social worker commented, 'He feels part of a family, this is the first time in a long time, he is comfortable and at home.' Children report that they have good relationships with staff, each having their favourites. One child added, 'she (manager) supports me, I call her mum, she is always there for me to talk to, I can phone her any time.' The permanently employed staff team offers consistent, familiar care to children, and longstanding trusting relationships develop. Staff know the individual children well and their supportive input has seen dramatic positive changes for children. The most significant is education. Staff support children to attend full-time education, and success here has seen one child catch up on two academic years in the year that he has lived at the home. For another child, academic achievement has been even more dramatic. Staff recognised that he could not read. This was confirmed by a home tutor, who assessed an ungradable reading age, where phonics were neither known nor grouped to form words. Only single numbers could be added and the child was unable to subtract. Since living in the home this past 10 months, the child has significantly progressed in all areas of learning. During a recent statutory meeting, he read his paperwork. His social worker added, 'I was totally shocked. It took my breath away when he read out loud.' Staff have supported children to learn and achieve. This, without doubt, has expanded their life opportunities as a direct result. Children have their health needs met. To ensure safe storage and administration of controlled drugs, staff undertake appropriate training and strict protocols are adhered to. As children physically grow, medication reviews seek to ensure that the prescribed dosage remains sufficient and effective. Both routine and specialist appointments are made to ensure that all ongoing health needs are monitored and met. Staff recognise the importance of family contact and offer both direct and practical support to meet children's contact plans. This supports family ties and the child's identity. For children in placement during this review period, this has also meant emotional support for a child undertaking 'goodbye' from an adopted family	

member and supporting a child whose family member frequently refuses contact. Again, staff offer direct support and opportunities for children to talk about these painful experiences. This has meant that children display less negative behaviour, as they learn to manage emotionally painful experiences themselves.

All children are engaged in activities which offer learning, socialisation and fun. As children grow, they receive support in developing independence skills. One particular area of interest is cooking, in which one child is developing real skill. The plan is to use this interest in their future career, with catering as their subject of choice when they enter college later this year. Staff offer children opportunities and they experience success, which means that self-esteem and confidence grow.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The sound relationships formed between staff and children have been instrumental in the reduction of anti-social behaviour, with more positive behaviours prevailing. Children have entered this house serving youth offending orders, yet receive no further criminal charges as they engage positively in their surroundings, adhering to boundaries and house rules. Generally, incidents of missing from home have reduced. However, more recently there was a period when such behaviour increased. Staff worked within their own protocols and closely with the statutory services. Where necessary, the manager pressed statutory services to meet their responsibilities. This contributed to children enjoying assessed overnight stays with friends without the need to go missing. Further, it ensured that independent visitors were available to all children returning from a 'missing' episode. Staff act as a good parent would. They follow up any concerns that come their way. This ensures that children in their care are protected and their welfare safeguarded. Physical intervention in this home has ceased. For one child, this is particularly significant as, prior to living in this home, physical intervention was a frequent daily occurrence in managing behaviour. General discussion and key-worker sessions allow children the personal space and time to discuss matters specifically relating to them. This not only supports good mental health but also helps children to self-regulate and develop self-control. Should staff consider particular behaviour to be bullying, regardless of whether children consider it a 'joke', strategies are put in place to ensure the safety and protection of the child. Staff also discuss these incidents in house meetings and in individual key-work sessions. This reinforces that bullying is not acceptable and helps children to understand the impact of such behaviours.	

During this review period, one child has left the home. From a very positive start and notable progress, changes to care planning saw a deterioration in behaviour. The manager gave notice on the placement as she realised that the home was unable to keep the child safe. She recognised the negative impact that the presenting behaviours had on other children in the home. In the short time since, risky or harmful behaviours have either ceased or been drastically reduced. Children at this home receive good levels of help and protection.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the post and holds a management qualification necessary to perform the task. She continues to expand her knowledge by undertaking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She has now been in post for over a year and has established a stable, experienced staff team that offers consistent and familiar care to the children placed. Staff report that they experience a supportive manager who offers leadership and clear direction. Careful selection and vetting processes ensure the employment of suitable staff to care for children in this home. A comprehensive organisational induction package introduces staff to this complex area of work. Staff access ongoing training to expand their understanding of matters specific to meeting the needs of children placed. All staff either have trained to the required level 3 diploma in childcare or are currently studying for it. Since the last inspection, training has included topics such as attachment theory and substance misuse. However, staff have not received training in matters of bereavement and loss, an area of heartbreak particularly relevant for one child placed. This does not provide staff with the knowledge they need to manage this topic effectively. Managers and staff work well as part of the team around the child. A social worker reported, 'My working relationship with the home is very good. I receive weekly reports and am kept informed of all significant events. Meetings are relaxed and staff are well prepared.' Social workers go on to describe the impact that the home has had on children: 'The home has made such a very, very, very positive difference for him. I have seen a great change in him.' Another said, 'He says that this is home and it has given him stability.' The manager has effective systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided to children. Children's views are valued and their comments sought through a variety of media. This has directly influenced the running of the house and how it is furnished. When concerns have been raised, matters are fully investigated. One social worker reported, 'I am happy that their investigation was thorough.'	

At the interim inspection undertaken in February 2016, two requirements and three recommendations were set to help to improve the quality and standards of care.

The first requirement was to improve the fixtures and furnishing of the home. Since that time, significant improvements have been made that are evident throughout the home. These include the installation of a new kitchen, the replacement of sofas and the decoration of a number of rooms. Children benefit from a more homely, comfortable environment and, as such, the home has met this requirement. However, a recommendation is made at this inspection as a number of redecoration and refurbishment projects remain outstanding.

The registered manager has met the second requirement by ensuring that all employees have undergone annual appraisals where their performance and fitness to perform their roles were considered. This has enabled staff and managers to measure performance and to consider individual professional development to deliver care to children as set out in the home's statement of purpose.

Of the three recommendations made, one cannot be considered as no young people have been placed since that time. The recommendation was to accept children only when full consideration is given to the impact on those already in placement. The home currently has a vacancy and the registered manager reported, 'The vacancy will remain as long as I want, as it's important to get the right match. It's their home.' The manager recognises the significance of matching the children to be placed to those already in placement.

The second recommendation will remain, as staff on probation are not consistently receiving supervision in line with the organisation's policy. Children placed in residential care display a range of complex behaviours. Staff require professional support and guidance through competent supervision in order both to understand these behaviours and to support children in managing them.

Neither is the final recommendation considered. The recommendation was to ensure that the appropriateness of any form of restraint of a child was analysed. However, since that time no child in this home has been subject to a physical intervention.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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