

SC471153

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned by a national children's home provider. The home is registered for up to two children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager was registered in July 2019. This is the manager's first registered manager role. However, she is experienced in working at a senior level with children in residential care and is undertaking a suitable management qualification.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/06/2018	Full	Good
24/10/2017	Full	Good
09/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/07/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, ensure that risk assessments relating to dogs visiting the home are specific to each animal and address all relevant areas of risk.

- The children's home must produce a children's guide. The children's guide must be made available to all children when their placement at the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency) and must be age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)
- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

In particular, maintain a clear and accurate copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home and a record of the actual rosters worked.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The manager ensures that children move into the home in a well-planned way, and that they are well matched with the resident child. Consequently, the children experience a stable and nurturing home. The plans for children who move on are similarly well managed in the best interests of the child. On occasion, the home has continued to care for a child after they turn 18, until suitable alternative arrangements are made. Because of the commitment shown by the staff, the children have absolute confidence that the staff will be there for them in their times of need.

The staff provide individualised care that meets the needs of each child. There is laughter, good-natured teasing and affection between the staff and children, which gives the home a warm, calm atmosphere. As a result of these positive relationships, all of the children make significant personal progress. They develop better self-care and social skills, begin to re-engage in education and generally show improved emotional health and well-being. The help and support that the staff provide has enabled some children to

successfully move to a foster family.

The staff have high aspirations for the children. The staff help the children to think about and make positive choices for their futures. A social worker said, 'The good planning for education has helped [the child] engage and stick with it.' This child, due to the support of staff, moved from being a highly resistant non-attender to really enjoying education and achieving 100% attendance.

The children are involved in all day-to-day decisions about their lives. They are confident that the staff will respond to any issues that they raise. For example, having a pet dog is a constant request at the regular children's meetings. As a result, the staff are exploring the options for fostering a dog.

The children live some distance from their families. The staff help them to maintain the safe friendships and family relationships that are important to them, driving long distances every weekend and school holiday. A parent said, 'They [the staff] bend over backwards.'

The children are very positive about their experiences of living at the home. They said that they like the staff, who often tell funny jokes. The children have a lot of fun and make some lovely memories, such as going on holidays and on trips to theme parks. They get to try new things, such as camping and equine care. The children sometimes maintain the appropriate new friendships that they have made at the home when they move on.

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

The children feel safe, secure and well cared for. The suitably trained staff understand the main risks to the children and manage these well. The staff provide an environment that the children want to be in. The children choose to spend time with the staff. The risks that the children faced, or presented, when they were admitted to the home have reduced considerably. Due to the good work that the staff have undertaken, violence towards staff does not happen and the children are no longer subject to exploitation. A social worker said, 'She [the child] has gone from high risk to no issues and she has a much better idea of how to keep herself safe.'

Although children now rarely go missing, the staff's response to children who do go missing is robust and caring. The staff talk to the children to understand the influencing factors and ensure that the placing local authority arranges an independent return home interview. This cohesive approach helps to keep the children safe.

The mutually respectful relationships that the staff build with the children underpin the calm atmosphere in the home. The staff are quick to recognise that much of the behaviour displayed is a normal teenage act of pushing boundaries, which, in a family home, would present less of a challenge. For example, on one occasion the children refused to sleep in their beds as they wanted an unplanned sleepover in the lounge. The

staff were therefore unable to go to bed. However, they quickly resolved this and arranged waking night staff cover. This prevented the escalation of what could have become a challenging situation.

The positive behaviour strategies are making a difference to the children. Antisocial behaviour is rare, and conflict is well managed. The reinforcement of positive behaviours and giving praise and rewards are embedded into the service. This approach is valued by the children. They choose rewards that mean something to them, such as a set of false eye lashes or a trip to the cinema. This is helping the children to break antisocial behaviour cycles and behave responsibly both in and outside the home.

The children really enjoy the regular visits from the staff's various dogs. The manager has developed a basic risk assessment regarding the dogs' visits to the home, but this is generalised. The assessment does not cover the individual temperament of each animal, its vaccination status or the arrangements for clearing up after the dog.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This is the manager's first registered manager post. She has successfully driven improvement in the service. The manager provides visible and effective leadership. Her open and non-hierarchical approach is valued by staff and children alike.

Quality assurance systems are effective. The manager consistently reviews and monitors all incidents at the home. This helps her to encourage reflective practice in the staff team, which, in turn, helps the staff to meet the ongoing and changing needs of the children.

Parents and professionals consistently said that the staff's collaborative approach, with them and the children, promotes strong partnership working.

The staffing changes in the team over the past 18 months have been well managed to reduce the impact on the children. The children continue to receive care and support from a consistent, competent and caring group of staff. As a result, the children continue to thrive.

The staff are individually enthusiastic and committed to ensuring the children's well-being. They feel well supported through effective inductions, supervision and team meetings. New staff benefit from having a comprehensive two-week block of training prior to taking up their post. Staff training is suitably targeted to meet the likely needs of children who live at the home.

The staff duty rota is not clear, nor is it always accurate in recording who was on duty at a given time. This could have an impact on the ability of an external agency to conduct any future investigation into staffing or safeguarding matters.

The children receive comprehensive information about the service prior to admission, via

the children's guide. However, the only available version is very wordy. This may limit the accessibility of information to those children whose English literacy levels are low.

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 differences 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: SC471153

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Road, Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Sarah Love

Registered manager: Ute Wichmann

Inspector

Joanna Heller: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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