

SC476289

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care for up to four children who may have social and emotional needs.

Three children were being cared for at the point of inspection.

There is no registered manager.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 August 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 4 October 2022

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
04/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2021	Full	Good
07/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The children live in a large, comfortable home where they have access to an enclosed garden. The children enjoy using the trampoline and large pool. They have lots of fun spending time with staff in the garden. The children's bedrooms are decorated to a high standard. Before the bedrooms were decorated, staff spent time with the children exploring how they wanted their rooms to look. The children's choices were listened to, and now their bedrooms reflect their personalities and current interests.

The progress that children are making in relation to their education is variable. Two children attend school on a full-time basis. Another child has a bespoke timetable of education being delivered in school and at home. While staff recognise the importance of education and attempt to deliver education in the home, the child's participation in this is limited.

Staff work hard to provide routines and boundaries for children. However, at times, staff do not work together, which means that responses to children are not always consistent. This leaves children not knowing what to expect from staff. When they feel this way, their behaviours can escalate.

Staff plan regular focused discussions with children. However, staff rarely follow the planner, nor do they coordinate with their colleagues. Instead, staff undertake sessions of their choice with the children. Therefore, opportunities for child-specific discussions are being missed, and children's identified needs are not consistently being supported. Consequently, one child found these discussions repetitive and no longer wishes to engage.

The children have recently been on holiday together, which they all enjoyed. Staff planned activities for all the children, taking into account their ages and what they are interested in. Generally, the two younger children, who have similar needs, did activities together, and the older child chose to do something else. All children's choices were accommodated. This led to all children having a nice time.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff are not always equipped with the necessary information to protect children and keep them safe. This is because although children's risk assessments are up to date, staff are not consistently reading them. This presents a risk because staff are not taking children's current risk-taking behaviours into consideration when planning care for children.

There have been some recent incidents where one child was missing from the

home. When the child was missing, staff worked closely with external agencies to facilitate the safe return of the child. The child was welcomed back into the home, and staff explored the reasons why the child went missing. This is good practice.

There have been some allegations made against staff. When these have been made, the manager has been proactive in their response, and there has been good collaboration with external agencies. However, the manager has not always fully understood the wider implications of safeguarding processes. For example, a member of staff was on shift yet was unaware that a safeguarding issue had been made about them. The manager had not communicated effectively or taken the necessary action to safeguard children. This lack of management action led to children and staff being placed in vulnerable situations with the potential for further allegations.

Physical interventions by staff are used as a last resort, and the interventions are minimal. Afterwards, children are given the opportunity to explore their feelings and worries. Staff receive a management debrief, and their role in the intervention is reflected on. The de-escalation attempts are not yet well recorded. Therefore, it is unclear how well staff can use de-escalation strategies with children.

Staff understand online risks for children. Children enjoy accessing online material through the home's TV and computer. Younger children are supported by staff to find what they want to watch. The older child has regular checks of their phone. When concerns have arisen, staff have taken necessary action to safeguard the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Staff and children have experienced a period of change and challenge. Although an acting manager is in role, they are not yet registered with Ofsted. The previous manager remains working for the company. This manager is supporting the acting manager through their induction period. The changes in management have led to some staff being confused about who they should escalate information to.

The staff team has experienced some changes, and there are several staff vacancies. Although some new staff have started, core staff are needed to complete extra shifts. This has been necessary to ensure that the correct staffing ratios are maintained. When staff have left, the children have felt the impact of relationships ending with staff. This has caused an element of sadness for one child who has experienced this loss.

The acting manager does not yet have established systems in place to support their quality assurance of the home. Management oversight of staff's understanding of key documents is not yet effective. Key documents are stored in different places, and this can cause staff to be confused about which form is the most current and what they need to refer to. This can be frustrating for staff. Equally, staff are not

equipped with the current knowledge required to meet the needs of the children effectively.

The previous manager had taken steps to address the requirements and recommendations following preceding inspections. Managers have striven to improve communication among the staff group. For example, managers have led training sessions on various topics. However, these measures have not yet achieved the required impact. There continues to be a lack of consistency regarding communication within the staff group and with other professionals. Feedback from external agencies has confirmed this too.

The leadership team has a clear vision for the home. It wants to secure good outcomes for children. However, these aspirations are yet to be realised. Feedback from professionals and records suggest that some staff do not always understand children's behaviour in accordance with their past trauma and individual circumstances. Managers have provided learning opportunities to explore staff's use of language; however, this remains a work in progress.

Staff describe the acting manager as supportive and approachable. In turn, staff want to support the acting manager in her new role. Staff say they are confident to express their views and opinions with managers. This is done through regular team meetings.

The leadership team has begun auditing within the home. Alongside this, a peer review has been completed regarding the quality of staff supervision. The acting manager is implementing systems to gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. This process is ongoing.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(v)(x)) This particularly relates to staff being consistent when addressing children's behaviour. Staff supervision should further reflect on children's care. Staff should provide care for children as outlined in the statement of purpose.	2 October 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and	2 October 2023

promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d))

This specifically refers to safe staffing levels being in place for children. This is dependent on the risks that children present with at any given time.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information in a non-stigmatising way and in a way that will be helpful to the children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC476289

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual: Lorna Fearon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Lizette Watts, Social Care Inspector
Helen Gronhaug, Social Care Inspector

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