

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC476289
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths
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	Samantha Millward
Registered manager	Mark Anthony Easie
Date of last inspection	N/A

Inspection date	03/02/2015
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Previous inspection	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Although this is the first inspection since registration in December 2014, this is not a new children's home. The home has been re-registered following a change in ownership. All children currently living in this home have been doing so for in excess of one year. All children enjoy a high level of stability while living in this home.

This home is judged to be providing a good, and in some respects, an outstanding service to children and there are clear signs that it has the capacity to improve further. Children who have experienced significant trauma in their lives achieve positive outcomes and make good progress in all aspects of their development. Children receive a high standard of personalised care and therapeutic support from a skilled and multi-agency team of professionals. As a result, children are provided with an excellent opportunity to reach their full potential.

Children are completely at the centre of all work taking place. Their safety and well-being are of paramount importance to the staff. Children feel safe and secure. Children's views are instrumental to the running of the home. They are fully involved in the formulation of their placement plans. As a result, children feel listened to and valued.

The management of the home is strong. The new Registered Manager is very

insightful in respect of the individual and complex needs of the children living in this home. He also demonstrates a detailed awareness and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Monitoring and recording systems have been introduced which are effective in tracking all aspects of the running of the home. This helps to ensure that the quality of care and outcomes for children continue to improve.

One requirement is made as a result of this inspection. This is in relation to fire safety. In order to improve the service further, two recommendations are also made. These are in relation to minor documentary errors in the home's Statement of Purpose and a minor shortfall in relation to medication recording. These shortfalls do not, however, detract from the outstanding quality of care and good outcomes children achieve while living in this home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides long-term care and therapy (off-site) for up to five children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The registered provider is a private company, operating a range of children's homes across the region.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
32 (2001)	make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention. (Regulation 32(1)(d))	20/03/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a written record of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children during their placement (NMS 6.15)
- ensure the home has a clear Statement of Purpose which is available to and understood by staff and children and reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance. (NMS 13.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children achieve good outcomes from their starting points while living in this home. One social worker commented: 'This child is doing really well and I am really pleased with the progress being made across the board.' Levels of risk-taking and challenging behaviour children display reduce. Their lives stabilise, they experience structure and they develop a range of life and coping skills. As a result, their future life chances are significantly improved.

All children are engaging in full-time education, and for the majority, attendance is excellent. For some, this is significant progress. A social worker said: 'The child has made real strides forward educationally. There has been an absolute turnaround from home tutoring for two hours a day to full-time schooling with work being pitched at the right level to help the child reach their full potential.' This engagement in education enhances children's sense of achievement and their opportunities and choices in adulthood are greatly improved.

Children make good progress in respect of their physical health. This is enhanced by attending core health appointments, undertaking physical activity and eating a healthy balanced diet. Young people develop improved self-care skills and start to take more care of their personal appearance and hygiene. This assists children with the development of personal relationships. It also helps children feel good about themselves and raises their self-esteem.

Children's emotional and behavioural development is enhanced while living in this home. Work undertaken by the staff and the home's clinical team helps children to understand their past and start to come to terms with their traumatic experiences. One child said 'I understand things more, I understand why I live here, my behaviour has improved and I am not struggling as much.' Consequently, children's emotional health improves and this impacts positively on their ability to form appropriate relationships with others.

Children benefit greatly from engaging in a wide range of leisure and community activities. One child said: 'We do loads of activities. I go horse riding and I love it.' Another commented: 'We go swimming and have some great fun. I go to army cadets and St John's Ambulance. I have made friends and really enjoy it. By engaging in their chosen activities, children are assisted to make progress emotionally, physically and socially. They make friends, they get fitter and they have fun. Not only does this help children develop self-confidence and a sense of achievement, it also enables them to make a positive contribution to their community.'

Relationships between children and their families are well supported in difficult circumstances. Arrangements are negotiated and agreed very sensitively with placing

social workers and in consultation with children. High levels of supervision and support during and after contact sessions have enabled children to maintain links with their family members. This has helped to improve the quality of family relationships. Improved family relationships enhance children's sense of identity. It enables them to feel a valued member of their family. It may also provide children with an opportunity to have improved support networks in the longer term.

Quality of care

outstanding

Children have excellent relationships with staff and speak extremely positive about them. One child said: 'The best thing about living here is the adults who are caring for us.' Another said: 'The adults here are 10 out of 10. My key carer though is 11 out of 10.' Observations of staff also demonstrate that they are extremely supportive and caring. A social worker commented: 'The child is really well supported by staff. The key carer has remained consistent. Listening to how the staff team talk about the child and advocate for them is inspiring.' The extremely positive relationships children have with a consistent team of committed staff helps to provide a secure emotional base from where children can develop.

The staff team is very experienced and knowledgeable. A social worker commented: 'A key strength of this home is the staff's ability to work with complex children and understand their needs. This child is very complex but staff understand and manage challenging behaviour extremely well.' Staff knowledge and expertise is enhanced by a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting children's needs. Twice daily handover discussions take place between schools and care staff to ensure that all adults involved with each child have a full understanding of the issues affecting children on a day-to-day basis. In addition, children and staff receive extensive input from the home's clinical team. This is in the form of individual therapy and life story work with each child, weekly clinical team meetings, fortnightly 'team around the child' meetings and regular consultation between the clinical team and care staff. This input ensures that robust placement plans are consistently implemented, regularly reviewed and monitored to meet individual need to a high standard. Working together practice is superb and ensures consistent approaches to care are provided. This provides certainty for children and impacts positively on their sense of safety and stability.

Staff have high aspirations for children and make children believe they are worth it by providing high levels of emotional warmth, encouragement and praise. Staff work tirelessly with children in order to ensure they have every opportunity to reach their full potential. A social worker said in respect of a child: 'they are exceptionally bright and the carers really encourage them to attend school and achieve.' Staff encourage children to develop realistic goals for the future and fulfil their dreams. Consequently, children develop aspirations for the future. A child said: 'I want to go in the army. I am knuckling down now and doing the right lessons to help me achieve my goals.' As a result of the high levels of encouragement and support

children receive from staff, children have significantly improved opportunities to reach their full potential.

The managers and staff are strong advocates for children. While they have positive and strong working relationships with other professionals, they are not afraid to challenge them to achieve the best possible outcomes for children. For example, when a child was required to be interviewed in relation to a criminal investigation, representations were made on behalf of the child to ensure that they would be appropriately prepared and supported during an interview and afterwards. This resulted in an improved and more child-focused plan being implemented which minimised the potential for disruption for the child.

Children are highly respected and valued in the home. They know how to make complaints and when they have done, they have been extremely satisfied with the responses they have received. At weekly children's meetings, which children have the option of chairing, children discuss any ideas they have about improving the home, how it could be made nicer, any worries or concerns they may have, as well as discussing the weekly menus and activities children wish to participate in. Children very much feel part of the decision-making process. One child said: 'Adults listen to my point of view.' Another commented: 'We pick what is on the menu. We pick our activities and day trips; we pick how to have our bedrooms. I help write my placement plan. I am now working on being more independent.' Excellent levels of communication and consultation impact positively on children. They feel listened to and this helps raise their self-esteem and confidence.

The home is maintained to a high standard. It provides for a very homely and comfortable environment. Children's bedrooms are extremely well equipped and personalised. Children's achievements and activities are celebrated. All communal areas within the home are decorated with many photographs of children having fun and engaging in different activities. This reminds children of their achievements, helps them feel valued and further improves their self-esteem.

Medication practices in the home are safe. Medication is consistently administered as per individual prescriptions. There are, however, occasional gaps in the recording of the time medication has been administered. This shortfall does not have an adverse impact on the safety and well-being of children and does not detract from the outstanding quality of care provided to children.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Children consistently state that they feel safe living in this home and they are able to identify staff who they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. A child said: 'The adults keep us safe. They do this by giving us good advice and by listening to us. There is always someone here who listens and who I can talk to.' The emotionally safe and secure environment provides children with a strong sense of safety and

well-being.

Good safeguarding procedures implemented by staff, high staffing ratios and work undertaken with children in respect of potentially risky behaviours further enhances levels of safety in the home. For example, in respect of bullying, proactive enforcement of the home's anti-bullying policy as well as individual and group work undertaken with children helps to promote an environment of mutual respect and acceptance between peers within the home. One child said: 'The adults will not accept bullying and they deal with it quickly. They work with us about respecting each other and not getting wound up.'

Children do not go missing from this home. Levels of supervision are high and on a few occasions when children have left the home, they have been followed and encouraged to return home swiftly. Staff are aware of the home's policy in respect of children who go missing from care and aware of children's individual risk assessment in relation to this. Although children living at this home are assessed as a low risk of going missing, due to their ages and high levels of vulnerabilities, if they were to go missing the level of risk to them would be extremely high. Staff understand this and understand what actions to take to best safeguard children should they ever go out of their sight.

Consultation between the manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is good. Allegations, concerns or complaints which come to the attention of the manager, no matter how trivial they may appear, are dealt with swiftly and in consultation with the LADO. Internal investigations are thorough and provide effective protection for children and staff.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities associated with each individual child. These are addressed through thorough risk assessments and proactive behaviour management plans which are consistently implemented and regularly reviewed. Reward systems and strategies used to de-escalate challenging behaviour have become increasingly effective. In addition, significantly improved recording of physical interventions, improved debriefing systems and increased management monitoring has resulted in a significant decrease in use of physical intervention. Practice has significantly improved in this area, and as a result, children are better safeguarded.

The home is a physically safe and secure environment. All health and safety assessments and checks are undertaken on a regular basis. Fire drills take place regularly and children fully understand fire safety procedures. A shortfall identified by the independent visitor in respect of staff requiring training in the use of the home's fire extinguishers remains outstanding. Although not having had an impact on children to date, this has the potential to do so and reduces safety of children. The Registered Manager is taking action to address this shortfall and hopes to address it as a matter of urgency.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager is suitably experienced and has been in post as the manager of this home since August 2014. He holds the management qualifications required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

The home is very well managed by a committed and enthusiastic manager. A member of staff commented: 'There is now a clear management structure. The new manager has made a big difference. He is supportive. He is approachable, he listens to our views.' The Registered Manager is knowledgeable and insightful in respect of the issues that affect the children living in this home. He uses this knowledge and insight, alongside good consultation with the clinical team, care staff, children and social workers to identify ways to further improve the quality of care and outcomes for children. The home's development plan reflects this.

Staff undertake a comprehensive programme of training which covers mandatory areas in relation to the safety and needs of the children in their care. They also attend clinical group supervisions and fortnightly meetings with the home's clinical team. In addition, a consultation system ensures that staff can seek advice and guidance in respect of very specific complex behaviours children may be displaying. A member of staff commented: 'If there is a behaviour I am not sure about, expert help is only a phone call away.' This enables staff to gain further insight, understanding and skills regarding specific and complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a consequence of the good quality training and support provided to staff, children benefit from care being provided to them by skilled staff who are equipped to meet their emotional and behavioural needs.

Staff feel well supported and valued by the management team. Morale is good and staff report a high level of satisfaction in their work. Staff attend regular team meetings. They also receive regular, formal supervision which is recorded in detail. Productive team meetings and regular good quality supervision ensures that practice is monitored. It also provides scope for further improvements in the delivery of care.

The new manager has developed and improved monitoring systems in the home. Weekly progress reports enable social workers to see what children have achieved over time educationally, behaviourally, socially and emotionally. Data in respect of children's progress and patterns of behaviour is collected. Patterns and trends are then analysed by the manager both qualitatively and quantitatively in consultation with the clinical team and children's placement plans and risk assessments are updated accordingly. The data collected and subsequent analysis of it enables the manager to clearly demonstrate the impact living in the home is having in improving outcomes and the future life chances for children.

Improvement is further promoted by the home's external and internal monitoring systems. An independent person visits the home on a monthly basis and carries out checks to monitor the welfare of children. These checks identify the strengths of the

home as well as minor shortfalls. Action plans are implemented to address shortfalls identified. Internal quality assurance systems are thorough. Consultation with children, staff and stakeholders takes place within both internal and external monitoring systems. This results in monitoring reports being more rigorous and effective in driving improvements.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides detailed information to parents and placing authorities about the care, support and services that the home offer. There are however, some minor inaccuracies within the document in relation to the current management structure and in relation to the areas in which staff have received training. Information in respect of the home's policy in relation to physical intervention is also limited. While these minor shortfalls do not have any impact on the children currently living in this home, it means that parents and stakeholders do not have complete information in respect of the service the home offers.

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.