

SC476326

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 registered to provide care for up to five children who have suffered early life trauma as the victims of serious abuse and/or neglect. As a result, the children have serious emotional difficulties that include development and attachment problems. A private company runs this home.

The registered manager's position is vacant. A suitably experienced interim manager is in post.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 June 2021

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: 7 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Good
12/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/10/2018	Full	Good
23/02/2018	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

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

At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home. Their overall progress and experiences are mixed. For example, some children are settled and continue to make good progress from their starting points. However, poor relationship dynamics between other children hinder their stability and progress.

Children have mixed relationships with staff and with each other. One child told the inspector, 'Staff have really helped me since I moved here'. However, there are occasions when some children have attempted to intimidate staff and children. In these circumstances, some children show little regard for the relationships that they have in the home.

Staff work hard to provide children with structure and routines. For the majority of children, this sets the foundation for good school attendance and progress. However, a teacher told the inspector that staff do not support one child to complete his home learning and that communication between staff and teachers requires improvement. The manager has acknowledged this shortfall during the inspection.

The home requires a significant amount of maintenance work to ensure that children live in a home which is warm and welcoming. For example, aspects of the home appear tired and dated while some carpets are dirty. In addition, the garden is overgrown and weedy. Despite their efforts to make a pleasant home for the children, the staff continue to be frustrated by delays to refurbishment work and the purchase of new items.

The provider's clinical team supports staff and children in the home. They play an integral role in overseeing children's day-to-day care and the quality of staff practice. For example, the clinical team provides staff with regular consultation and host regular team around the child meetings to oversee and review children's progress.

However, during the inspection, staff were unable to consistently demonstrate a clear understanding of the home's models of care. In addition, records of challenging incidents demonstrate that staff practice is not always in line with the theoretical models set out in the home's statement of purpose. A member of staff told the inspector, 'Everyone here has different styles; it depends who is on shift. Some staff manage situations better than others.' This means that children receive inconsistent care.

Staff understand the importance of children spending time with those who matter the most to them. This is a considerable strength of the home and means that children are not isolated from their families. Staff are flexible and supportive in their approach. For example, staff travel considerable distances and stay in hotels to ensure that children spend good-quality time with their families.

Children engage in a range of positive activities outside of the home, where they can develop sporting talents and individual abilities. For example, one child is a member of the local rugby club while another is a talented rider of BMX bicycles. These experiences provide children with opportunities for fun and enjoyment, and the acknowledgement given to their significant achievements builds their self-esteem.

Children's health needs are promoted and met. Staff support children to become healthier. Children are supported to attend health appointments. Staff provide children with healthy and nutritious meals.

Staff support children to participate in their care. For example, regular meetings and key-work sessions provide children with opportunities to plan activities and set targets. This encourages children to take ownership of their care.

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

Systems to manage and review incidents of bullying in the home are ineffective. For example, managers and staff told the inspector that bullying incidents are not always recorded. This means that some children's feelings of being a victim of bullying are not fully understood or recognised. In addition, managers and staff told the inspector that some staff are intimidated by a child. This means that staff do not always provide a consistent response to manage incidents of bullying. During the inspection, senior managers put plans in place to address these shortfalls. This includes providing additional staffing resources and observations of staff practice.

Staff do not consistently challenge unacceptable behaviours or help children to develop an awareness of the possible implications of their actions. Subsequently, some children do not deem their negative behaviours to be socially unacceptable. In addition, the quality of one-to-one support provided to children is variable. This means that some children do not acquire a sense of responsibility for their conduct.

Overall, children have detailed, individualised behaviour management plans and risk assessments which reflect their needs. In general, the manager regularly reviews

these plans to enable staff to keep up to date with the agreed measures to help reduce risk and keep children safe. However, on some occasions, the manager has not updated children's risk assessments. These recording shortfalls have not had an impact on the children's welfare or safety.

Incidents of restraint continue to reduce in the home. On some occasions, staff use restraint to keep children safe when they become distressed and unsettled. This practice is appropriate and proportionate. However, the inspector found some shortfalls in the recording of these incidents. For example, staff do not fully record why children were unsettled prior to the incident and the steps staff take to settle children prior to using restraint. This means that the manager is not able to make a fully informed analysis of these incidents.

Despite these shortfalls, staff did demonstrate some effective safeguarding practice. For example, on rare occasions, a child has absconded from the home. Staff provide a robust response and work well to return the child safely. Children do not go missing from the home. In addition, the frequency of challenging incidents has significantly reduced for children. Some children have learned strategies to help them deal with difficult emotions. A child told the inspector, 'It's been good for me being here. I've changed a lot. I used to be angry all the time but now I'm not'. Furthermore, staff reward children for their positive behaviour.

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

The responsible individual and manager are aware of the strengths and areas of development in the home. For example, some staff provide children with inconsistent care. Staff told the inspector that some shifts lack organisation and planning. Despite these shortfalls, staff know children well and genuinely care about them. Staff are committed and are keen to improve the care they provide to children.

The experienced and stable staff team has a good range of experience and skills. It is committed to children and keen for them to make progress. Staff provide children with nurture and encouragement. However, for some staff, this good practice is undermined by low morale and an inability to accept the manager's vision for the home.

Staff keep children's plans under review. However, recording is not clear, and the quality of recording is variable. Shortfalls in maintaining records mean that children's journeys may be misunderstood. Despite these recording shortfalls, staff understand children's plans and can articulate them clearly. Staff work proactively with agencies and families to review children's plans.

Staff benefit from regular supervision and training. Team meetings provide staff with opportunities to discuss children's progress and examine their practice. The manager works alongside the clinical team to provide staff with specialist training. However, the manager told the inspector that she has not felt supported in her role. In

addition, the manager does not feel that she has received the appropriate training. Furthermore, senior staff told the inspector that they have not received appropriate supervision training. This is a missed opportunity to equip the manager and senior staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles.

The registered manager has monitoring systems in place. However, while these identify some strengths and areas to develop, their overall impact is variable. In addition, the manager told the inspector that some staff have failed to invest in her vision for the home. This means that some staff do not make the necessary improvements to their practice as identified by the manager. This impasse means that opportunities to improve the quality of children's care are missed.

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, 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(x)) This relates to staff supporting children's education to ensure that they achieve their potential and do not fall behind their peers.	09 August 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust;	09 August 2021

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;

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;

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;

help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;

strive to gain each child's respect and trust;

understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;

understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and

have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(viii)(ix)(xi)(xii)(xiii))

This specifically relates to the need for staff to provide children with effective support to help them understand the impact of bullying on their peers.	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) This specifically relates to the need for staff to consistently intervene during incidents of bullying to keep children safe. In addition, staff will accurately report and review all incidents of bullying and take steps to safely manage these incidents.	09 August 2021
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	09 August 2021

promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(e)(h)) This specifically relates to the need for staff to provide children with consistent care and make the necessary improvements to their practice as identified by the manager. In addition, staff will provide care in line with the home’s statement of purpose.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) This specifically relates to the need for the manager and senior staff to receive appropriate training and support.	09 August 2021
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) This relates to the need for staff to ensure that children’s records are clear, accurate and up to date.	09 August 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home environment is appropriately furnished and maintained in order to provide children with a warm and welcoming home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC476326

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: Clare Hadfield

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, Social Care Inspector

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