

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC476326
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
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	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	N/A

Inspection date	30/09/2014
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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	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Children continue to experience continuity of care and attain good outcomes despite a year of many staff and management changes. Therapeutic work and partnerships with local authorities and education providers are well embedded, enabling good outcomes to continue. Children experience consistently high quality support from all staff. This promotes their social and emotional development particularly well. All care practice is meticulously planned so that children's individual needs and the requirements of safe group living are both met. As a result, children are safe and unsafe situations and behaviour do not occur very often.

Leadership and management arrangements in the home remain good despite the re-registration of the home in March 2014 due to owner organisational changes. The long standing Registered Manager returned from maternity leave in 2014 then subsequently moved on. The new manager is competent, experienced and able to participate in the wider leadership and management of the organisation. However, a number of minor shortfalls in practice and leadership have occurred since the home was last inspected. Most of these shortfalls had already been identified by the new manager and plans to address them are underway. None of the shortfalls have compromised the quality of care being provided or the progress of children.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This private company children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose that includes all the matters listed in this regulation. (Regulation 17B(3))	03/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and that this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for (NMS 19.5)
- ensure that a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made against a particular member of staff, including details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, a record of any action taken and the decisions reached, is kept on the person's confidential file and a copy is provided to the person as soon as the investigation is concluded (NMS 20.7)

- extend the contribution of children into the monitoring and operation of the home, so that their views and concerns are seriously taken into account (NMS 21.1)
- ensure that risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out and regularly reviewed. This specifically relates to creating a relevant, useable location risk assessment and reviewing children and young people's risk assessments so that they are useful as a practice tool (NMS 10.8)
- ensure that the learning and development programme equips staff with the skills required to meet children's needs and keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that information about each child is recorded in a way that is helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. (NMS 22.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children continue to be settled here and have made good progress in developing a positive self-view. They are able to make and sustain appropriate attachments to staff and continue see them all as safe adults, despite various changes to the staff team. Children's anxieties have 'lowered immensely' according to one child's social worker, enabling them to control unhealthy and aggressive behaviour and show a good sense of humour. All children are attending regular therapy and life story sessions provided away from the house by the organisation. This helps them to understand their backgrounds and become more resilient. As a result, children manage their emotions well overall and talk through their day-to-day concerns maturely with staff. They also participate actively in more complex decisions about their lives, such as moving on from the home.

Children understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and good hygiene routines. They learn about specific aspects of this, by using workbooks with their key carers. They do not smoke and they eat regular, healthy meals and snacks, with limited treats of sweets and junk foods. They enjoy varied and active sports and activities in their free time and when they are on holiday with staff. For example, children enjoy tennis, cricket, cycling and fishing. Some children also take part in clubs and activities in the community and are working towards some unsupervised time. Children enjoy memorable trips and activities when they go with staff to see family members, perhaps on a visit to the zoo. This means that contact visits are successful because children are relaxed.

Teachers and head teachers confirm that children are achieving well in their education given their starting points. They have different key strengths in maths and literacy but most are achieving two sublevels a year in core subject areas. One teacher said a child can now 'see a future' and has made significant progress in learning the home language of one of their parents. Another child is now ready to move into mainstream school having progressed quickly to get up to date. Children are also concentrating well after school, completing their homework with the support of staff and helping with tasks like putting the shopping away, laying the table, preparing meals, loading the dishwasher and emptying bins.

Quality of care **good**

Children feel that staff are consistently concerned with their wellbeing. They are confident to share their wishes and feelings with staff. This is because staff provide highly individualised and well-planned care. Each member of staff knows which child they are supporting during their shift and what the child's goals and routines are. For

example, there is careful planning of evenings and settling at bed-time. Each child has a box with relevant items which they choose from to help them wind down and settle to sleep. There is also excellent transition and closure work done with children who are moving on. Detailed, illustrated calendars written in child-friendly language are put together with children to show them exactly what is happening and when. Meetings with new carers, phone calls, overnight stays, activities, leaving parties, farewell activities and handing across their life story to new carers are all carefully planned. It is made clear to children throughout that staff are 'keeping them in mind' whenever they are away from the home. As a result, children and social workers alike have confidence in staff and know they care. A social worker for a child who recently moved said: 'Staff are all professional, personable, knowledgeable and welcoming. Their knowledge of the children is exemplary.'

Staff positively address challenges and barriers to children's educational progress and achievement. Teachers say that there are good daily handovers and any issues are discussed and managed well. Where necessary, staff come in to support children, for example at lunchtime. Staff diligently encourage and support children with their homework. They also provide out of school learning through key sessions using child-friendly work packs and each child's 'feel good file'. As a result, children are enjoying and achieving. However, during times of staff change, the frequency of key sessions and recorded consultation with young people lapses somewhat. Records are also seldom completed alongside the child they are about. Furthermore, records do not capture children's views clearly or regularly enough to maximise their usefulness for planning children's care, developing staff or making changes to the home. As a result, children are sometimes unsure what their plans say and staff feel that completing records takes them away from children. Nevertheless, children are confident to express their wishes to staff and in their survey questionnaires most of them said to Ofsted that staff do listen to them.

The home and organisation continue to make a high quality contribution to children's care plans. They regularly reflect on children's presenting behaviour and seek to understand what is going on for children and how best to help them. 'Team around the child' meetings are the formal forum for this work and include the child's therapist and life story worker. All the team share insights and proposed strategies about key issues in children's lives. As a result, staff contribute to and challenge children's care plans. For example, changes and challenges are proposed to the type and frequency of contact with family members, the timing of moves to mainstream schooling, or recommendations about safeguarding children and others in relation to free time. Equally, staff demonstrate skill in working with other professionals to maximise positive outcomes for children. They do this by analysing the relationships between children and their presenting behaviours. As a result, daily routines are adjusted, groupings are adjusted and each child's safety and welfare are promoted.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Children are very safe here because staff fully understand their individual vulnerabilities and supervise them closely on a one to one basis. All children say that they feel safe because they trust the staff to keep them safe and deal with any unsafe situations that arise between them. Children know who is looking after them each day and night and who is helping them get ready for bed. Staff talk about keeping safe day to day and skilfully use tools, such as the 'safe touch group' and techniques, such as reframing, to teach children about safe, appropriate social behaviour. Staff plan how they will support children at specific times when they feel vulnerable, such as at bedtime, when they are having contact with relatives, or when they are using the internet. As a result, children learn how to behave safely and do not harm one another. However, children's risk assessment documents do not support staff to ensure consistent safe care practice. This is because staff know the behaviour management plan and are well briefed, and therefore seldom review or refer to the risk assessments.

Children respond well to the praise, rewards, and recognition of engagement and positive behaviour that staff give them. Consequences, rather than sanctions, are used to help children understand the implications of unsafe or unwanted behaviours for themselves and others. Children do not go missing and very rarely engage in disruptive, risky behaviour or bullying. However, they do display damaging, violent behaviour at times and physical intervention has often been necessary as a last resort to prevent serious harm or damage. A number of the physical intervention records do not detail that children were spoken to afterwards about the intervention and full records are not always made in a timely way. This regulatory breach is a missed opportunity to help children express their views and move on after a restraint.

Children are well protected from abuse because staff are trained in child protection and therapeutic, safe care practice. Staff are sensitive to children's backgrounds and how their own gender, age or appearance might affect children's feelings. Staff ensure that children are never together unsupervised and do not go into one another's rooms. Staff settle children to bed, but ensure that bedroom doors are open at this time. All allegations about staff are referred to the local authority designated officer. As a result, children feel safe and are safe. However, the summaries that staff receive when an allegation is resolved do not give sufficient detail to fully assist any managers and organisations who are vetting staff and making decisions about staff suitability in the future.

Leadership and management

good

The home was well managed by the previous manager and this is continuing. The new manager is up to date with new legislation and practice developments and brings diverse experience of children's home management to the organisation, which he began working with some ten years ago. His application for registration has now been received by Ofsted and his fitness interview formed part of this inspection. He is

convinced that the model of therapeutic care, with regular sessions for therapy and life story work, is key to securing positive outcomes for children. He has high expectations of what the whole staff team can achieve with their present skills and competence and has gained the confidence of children too.

The new manager has identified key areas for improvement, such as working to reduce physical interventions. This is already working well and the number of interventions has reduced significantly as staff remind children of the short term goals and activities which could be foregone if they lose control. The manager is also seeking specialist training about the specific conditions of children placed, and intends to campaign for opportunities to undertake therapeutic qualifications equivalent to the foundation degree formerly offered to staff. Children also benefit from an improved focus on health and safety in the home. For example, issues such as the cleanliness of the home, attention to fire safety, maintenance and safety of the cars and safe preparation and storage of food have all recently been addressed.

The manager is beginning to use monitoring tools and data analysis to identify the home's strengths and weaknesses and areas for development. He is aware of the importance of evaluating data in order to learn lessons and make improvements. He welcomes the new, independent monthly visitor review of the home which began in September 2014. He also welcomes the new data tool for making a daily log of each child's day against a number of risks. Therapists will analyse this data and present it to 'team around the child' meetings in order to assist in care practice planning. This, combined with better planned consultation with children and stakeholders to check how they view the work of the home and any changes which are proposed, aims to secure improved and measureable outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers value the contribution of staff to children's good outcomes and have extended the shift length. This provides children with more consistency and gives staff longer breaks away from their work between shifts. There is commitment to provide continuing good quality supervision, training and appraisal for staff, making better use of existing documentation. The manager and deputy manager are committed to improving the consistency and timeliness of staff supervision and appraisal, as well as ensuring that children's views inform annual appraisals. Overall, children benefit directly and indirectly from good leadership and management of the home.

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.