

SC066897

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to 28 children with learning disabilities. The home forms part of a residential school specialising in care, education and therapy for children with autism.

At the time of the inspection, 22 children were living across the 6 houses.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2022.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 December 2025

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 11 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
14/11/2023	Full	Outstanding
09/02/2023	Full	Good
21/06/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress as a result of living in a home where they are loved and encouraged to do the best that they can. Both parents and social workers are highly complimentary about how well the staff team bring out the best in each child. Children are happy and confident in their home and parents have been amazed by the new skills that they have learned.

Children enjoy new experiences, both within the extensive grounds and in the community, including activities that their families never thought possible. Children actively choose their lunches from a wide range of options, not only broadening their palate, but helping them to learn new skills for decision-making in cafés and restaurants in the community. The 'food explorers' group helps children to try new foods with different colours and textures. The groups are themed, such as by colours of the rainbow or foods from specific countries. Children who have previously had extremely restricted diets are now enjoying foods of all types, colours, flavours and textures. This wider variety of diet is leading to children becoming much healthier.

Children's targets and progress are well recorded through 'learning journeys'. The multidisciplinary team across the home and school video-documents children's progress in their target areas. At their reviews, children can use their video diaries to showcase their skills and demonstrate how they have learned them. The multidisciplinary team assesses when children have met their targets and works collaboratively to set the next areas for development for each child. Weekly postcards to families and social workers highlight children's activities for the week and provide an additional means of celebrating their successes and achievements.

Children are all engaged in education according to their needs. Those who cannot tolerate the classroom setting are supported with programmed nurture sessions in other areas of the home and grounds. The therapies, home and education teams work closely to provide a tailored approach for each child's learning style.

Children's health is well understood and monitored. The home has access to medical resources such as a doctor, mental health services and speech and language therapists, who ensure that children quickly get the right support and services when needed. Children experience improved health outcomes when living in the home, including being up to date with immunisations, having a clear health plan to support progress and leading a healthier lifestyle that impacts positively on their wellbeing. Within a short space of time, children's health and wellbeing outcomes improve due to the dedication and commitment of the multidisciplinary team.

Medication is only administered by suitably trained staff. Their competence is thoroughly tested before being allocated these tasks and it is reviewed annually. Medication audits are completed weekly; this is an effective system for identifying any potential medication

errors. While errors are not frequent, any that do occur are fully investigated and lessons are learned. The team around the child is notified of any errors, to ensure transparency.

Staff are prepared and trained to meet medical needs that may emerge, and children are helped to understand any operations or procedures that they need. This helps the children to feel prepared and to become more able to manage potentially challenging experiences.

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

Children are confident in their surroundings and they approach staff when needed. Staff have an excellent understanding of each child's individual styles of communication. The use of electronic and augmentative communication tools, signing, gestures and speech means that children can share how they are feeling alongside staff being highly attuned to each child's needs, actions and demeanour.

A particular strength within the home is the joint working between the staff, the school, the multidisciplinary therapies team and the nurture team, who also support children's communication through their behaviour. This means that all children's communication through behaviour is understood, children are supported to share in more appropriate ways when needed, and, most importantly, staff are responsive to children's needs.

Staff are positive in their approach to children when they are upset or distressed, working tirelessly to understand how they can help the child. The multidisciplinary approach leads to children being understood and staff are able to provide swift support when they see that a child is upset. Through this approach, the use of physical intervention is low and children are happy and confident in expressing their wishes and feelings.

Safeguarding responsibilities are well understood by managers, who have excellent oversight and are attuned to any potential concerns. There is a multi-agency approach to managing risk, ensuring transparent working and a consistent approach across school and social care. Staff are confident to raise concerns or worries and know that they will be listened to and receive a response. The open approach and continual discussion around the importance of raising concerns keeps children increasingly safe and ensures that safeguarding is always high on the agenda.

The home's grounds are kept safe, allowing children as much freedom as possible. There have been significant investments in improving the quality of the environment, although some areas still require further maintenance and updating.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The managers and senior leadership team are highly aspirational for the children who live in the home. They do not see a child's diagnosis as a barrier to their success. The

managers lead by example, which leads to all staff wanting the very best for each child at the home.

Staff have the training that they need to care for the children. When additional training is required for children's specific or emerging needs, this is provided.

Staff are well supported. They have regular supervision and annual appraisals. Senior leaders are approachable and staff feel that they can talk to them at any time due to their genuine open door approach. The hard work of staff is recognised through nominations and good practice awards.

Children's plans are formulated based on the child's abilities. The plans are written in a way that showcases children's skills and explains the role of the staff, rather than emphasising the help that the children require. Leaders know each of the children well and are both aspirational for each child and proud of the children's achievements.

The home has been working with Southampton University and ACoRNS (Autism Community Research Network) to develop various communication and video stories in preparation for when children move on from the home. These personalised digital stories support children's moves to adulthood using videos, photos and audio to illustrate the child's life. Alongside the traditional electronic/paper records and referral, these stories help the child to show their new home how they interact and what they enjoy. The children are involved and the stories help to bring the full personality of the child to life.

The professionals learning community is a multidisciplinary team that includes members from within and external to the organisation. The team reviews the practice in the home and considers learning and development externally in order to continually challenge and develop practice in the home and the school to ensure that it remains current.

Additionally, the managers have been working on building emotional resilience through communication. This is evident through the houses and in all of the children's plans, with regard to how they are helping the children to consider their feelings and express these through electronic and other communication tools. This joint working has led to the home sharing their newfound approach with other schools and services locally and further afield.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home environment is maintained to a high standard to provide a welcoming environment for children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: SC066897

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Ltd

Registered provider address: 4th Floor, Parkview, 82 Oxford Road, Uxbridge UB8 1UX

Responsible individual: Katherine Landells

Registered manager: Kirsty Marsden

Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector
Lisa O'Donovan, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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