

1227060

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to 23 children who have learning disabilities and/or emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 February 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children and young people form strong, trusting relationships with staff.
- Children and young people benefit from consistency between their home and school life. Most have good attendance and engagement with the school.

- The onsite multi-disciplinary team provides good clinical support and advice to children, young people and staff.
- Behaviour management is good and staff have a clear understanding of strategies to use.
- The staff has received training around autistic spectrum disorder and mental health, providing them with knowledge and skills to support children and young people affected by these conditions.
- The implementation of the event, consequence, outcome (ECO) system encourages reflection and reparation, alongside celebrating children and young people's achievements.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The management team does not always ensure the prompt and proper repair of damage, such as broken windows.
- The children and young people who do not attend the residents' meetings are not notified of the decisions made and actions to be taken by managers and staff.
- Staff are not consistently recording the work they have undertaken in relation children and young people's targets on the daily recording forms. Information is not being collated to clearly identify progress made by children and young people against their care plans.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/11/2016	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(2)(c)(i))</p> <p>Specifically, to provide a welcoming, homely environment in all the homes and to make repairs in a timely fashion to maintain a domestic rather than an institutional impression.</p>	<p>31/03/2018</p>

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home’s care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child’s cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. (‘Guide the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 22 paragraph 4.11)

Specifically, to inform those children and young people not attending the Chatterbox meetings of the decisions made.

- Staff should be familiar with the home’s policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (‘Guide the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62 paragraph 14.4)

Specifically, to ensure that staff consistently complete daily recording forms to identify the work on children and young people’s targets. Linking this information to the care plans will make it easier to identify the progress made.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people make progress in different areas of their lives. Individualised care planning addresses how staff meet children and young people's needs in respect of their race, culture, religion, gender and disability. Effective monitoring takes place and key workers provide a monthly overview to identify children and young people's progress. Small and realistic achievements are celebrated. This leads to improved self-esteem and confidence.

Some children and young people have lived at the home for many years and develop good relationships with staff. Children and young people benefit from consistent care, boundaries and routines. This is particularly important for those who struggle with transitions and changes. A parent reported: 'My son's care worker has an extremely good relationship with him and seems to have a good influence on him.'

Most children and young people's attendance and engagement in education is good. They benefit from a service that combines care and education seamlessly. This provides consistency of communication and behaviour management strategies across both settings. Some children and young people are now successfully engaging in education after years of non-school attendance. This includes some achieving qualifications with opportunities for outside training and work experience, such as working in charity shops or cafeterias. As a result, children and young people's overall skills improve, they achieve success and benefit from enhanced integration in the local community. A social worker said: 'On my visits and through the information I have, [name of young person] is settled within the home and there has been massive progress in his school attendance and academics, which previously was a major issue when he was home.'

The older young people benefit from opportunities for additional learning and development. Skills include self-care, making decisions, encouragement of self-reliance and responsibility. Young people learn independent living skills, which includes them travelling alone in the community. This gives them a sense of achievement, raising their confidence and self-esteem.

When children and young people struggle emotionally, they have access to regular clinical support from the onsite multi-disciplinary team. This includes input from the occupational therapist and a speech and language therapist. Staff receive advice and guidance from the team, particularly about communication and sensory needs and behaviour management. Some staff are receiving training around mental health to meet the needs of those children and young people who struggle in this area.

The children and young people enjoy a variety of social and recreational activities such as going bowling or 4D golf. This provides them with the chance to have new experiences or to participate in hobbies and interests. Health and well-being are promoted through specific opportunities, which help with the development of social skills. Children and young people visit each other's homes and have fun together, such

as by playing pool, which results in marked improvements in their relationships with peers.

The children and young people have different forums to express their views such as key-working sessions, individual chats and Chatterbox meetings held as a group. However, there is no process for informing children and young people who do not attend of the decisions made. Advocacy is a high priority for the manager. As a result, the children and young people have access to the independent advocate who regularly visits the home. When necessary, the manager escalates concerns to the placing authority on the children and young people's behalf.

Highly effective relationships with families support young people to maintain contact with those important to them. Contact is actively promoted, with staff supporting parents to make the time they spend with their children pleasant and enjoyable. Families who visit the home are welcomed and experience a positive and encouraging time. Children and young people benefit from the flexibility this offers.

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

The management team considers the needs of the children and young people living at the home when looking at new referrals. Several young people have arrived at the home since the last inspection. Their move into the home was effective and was carefully planned by managers. Impact risk assessments contain full information about the new child or young person. Careful deliberation and robust care planning help to reduce any negative impact on others and keep children and young people as safe as possible. Consequently, children and young people quickly settle.

Individualised risk assessments outline children and young people's vulnerabilities and advise staff how to minimise potential risks and dangers. Staff are committed to keeping young people safe, allowing them to learn from their own mistakes as part of growing up and becoming more independent. There have been some missing episodes. However, protocols are in place, drawn up in partnership with other agencies. Staff know how to respond, and these incidents are only for short periods of time. Staff's actions are effective in reducing the risk to young people when they attempt to run away. Children and young people receive prompt independent return to home interviews.

Detailed, but easily understood, behavioural management plans help support staff to manage children and young people's behaviour. Some staff have received training around autism so have a good awareness of how this condition can lead to behaviours that are challenging. This understanding has helped staff use distractions, redirection and communication effectively. Children and young people respond well to alternative behaviour strategies. However, when children and young people react quickly without warning, they sometimes need to be held to keep themselves and others safe. On these occasions, trained staff appropriately use low-level holds. Children and young people respond well to a consistent care approach with clear rules and boundaries. They explore how to manage their frustrations and emotions, such as by using sensory toys or ear defenders, so there is not a high level of significant incidents.

Staff no longer use sanctions. The use of the event, consequence, outcome (ECO) system has provided staff with a new way of working with children and young people to help them consider the impact their behaviour has had on others. The system also helps staff to reflect on their feelings and responses at the time. Reparation can be in the form of a contribution to the damage or a letter of apology. This approach is further strengthened through staff celebrating children and young people's achievements. The manager said: 'The ECO form is to draw upon positives even if there is a negative incident.' Some children and young people have responded well and behaviour has improved. However, when damage occurs, such as broken windows, the management team does not always ensure that there is a prompt repair. This makes some areas look institutional rather than homely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has extensive experience working within residential care, and has the required leadership qualification as well as being a qualified social worker. She became the manager when the home was registered in December 2015, having previously worked at the home when a different provider owned it. The service benefits from the leadership of a committed and skilled manager and management team who maintain a thorough oversight of young people's behaviour, needs and progress.

The manager knows the children and young people very well and provides strong leadership that is child-centred. She has effective oversight of the work undertaken by staff and has successfully implemented the new behaviour management system. The manager's monitoring is good. However, staff do not consistently complete daily recording forms to identify the work undertaken in relation to children and young people's targets. This failure to link information to care plans makes it more difficult to identify progress made by children and young people.

Staff employment practice is good and provides safe recruitment of staff. The new induction programme makes sure staff receive a thorough introduction to the home. Continued training makes sure they have the necessary skills to work with children and young people. Ongoing professional development is encouraged. A new staff member said: 'I have shadowed people doing the job. I have had lots of training including safeguarding training during my induction. But this is also covered in my supervision and every week we are given scenarios.'

Staff speak of feeling supported and being provided with guidance during regular supervision sessions. Children and young people are discussed at team meetings, and regular clinical meetings are particularly reflective with a clear, time-focused action plan for staff to follow. The staff team has effective working relationships with parents and placing authorities, communicating regularly about children and young people's progress.

The manager uses feedback obtained from stakeholders, parents, children and young people for the quality of care review. The evaluation of the service contributes towards making improvements as outlined within the development plan. The manager

demonstrates a clear understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. The monthly independent visitor monitors the service thoroughly to provide external scrutiny. The manager responds promptly, rectifying identified areas for improvement.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1227060

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Limited

Registered provider address: Cambian, Waterfront, Hammersmith Embankment,
Chancellors Road, London W6 9RU

Responsible individual: Alexis Johnson

Registered manager: Rikke McIntosh

Inspectors

Tina Ruffles, social care inspector
Matt Reed, HMI

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