

# SC066821

Registered provider: Cambian Whinfell School Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care, accommodation and education on site for a maximum of 14 young males who have a learning disability, including complex needs and autistic spectrum disorders. Accommodation is split, with the majority of young people living on the main site, with facilities for some to experience a semi-independent living situation located a short distance away.

**Inspection dates:** 15 and 17 May 2017

**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:** 12 January 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because

- Young people benefit from living in the combined environment of home and school in which care and teaching staff work cooperatively and cohesively together, providing a 24-hour curriculum which generates a high-level consistency of care.
- Aspirations for young people are high, with disability not recognised as a barrier to young people living a full and fulfilling lifestyle.
- The home develops strong relationships with parents, carers and other professionals, creating inclusive working partnerships which reflect the team-centred approach taken by the home.
- A structured environment with clearly defined boundaries provides a sense of security and safety for young people.
- The structure and boundaries in place still allow for individuality to thrive, with plans, strategies and areas of personal risk all individualised to reflect identity and need.
- A competent, skilled and highly motivated staff team is well led by an experienced senior team that has excellent organisational and management skills.

The children's home's areas for development

- Constant reflection and evaluation of working practices allow the home to continue to move forward. For example, senior staff are looking at the balance between behavioural consequences and rewards.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/05/2016	Full	Outstanding
08/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/07/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

### Recommendations

- Create a specific section within the missing from care central records that evidences in full the arrangements and action taken regarding return interviews. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

At the last full inspection in May 2016, the home attained an overall judgement of outstanding. Since then, the home has continued to review and update its practice with the sole intention of improving outcomes for the young people it cares for. This is a home and school that works together cohesively. There is a total focus on getting the best for young people, with working practices and daily routines designed to meet their needs. As a result, based on their starting points, young people make exceptional progress in all areas of their lives.

For example, a young person who has been in the home for some time spoke about the positive outcomes that he has enjoyed as a result of living at this home. He has completely transformed from an unhappy, reclusive person who had suffered a number of placement breakdowns into a young man who has developed many skills that are preparing him for independence. He is able to look towards the future with optimism and real ambition. He explained, 'I have a lot of plans for the future with a number of options open to me.'

Each young person's needs are identified and confirmed quickly after admission. Those needs translate into high-quality planning documents, assessments of risk and strategies to address individual behaviour, which are reviewed and updated regularly to keep them current. As a result, young people embark on a programme of events that addresses all areas of their lives. For example, this includes displaying more settled behaviours, developing self-confidence, enjoying new experiences that turn into interests and hobbies, becoming fully engaged with their education, developing social networks and preparing for adulthood.

Professionals and parents collectively appreciate the positive changes that young people make and the quality of care that they receive. A social worker told the inspector, 'The home is working really well with a young person who is predictably unpredictable. He has been taking two steps forward, one step back. Now he is taking three steps forward and only one step back.' This is viewed by the social worker as significant progress, underpinned by the persistence of staff. Another social worker spoke positively about the high levels of support given by staff to help a young person,

who was relatively new, to settle into the home.

A parent told the inspector about the care provided to her son, 'I can't fault the home. They treat him and my family as one, providing support to all of us.' Another parent said of her child, 'Staff really care about the children they look after. He has come on leaps and bounds in such a short time. He is so settled and happy.'

Creating and maintaining meaningful and trusting relationships with young people is an area that staff excel in. Their understanding and recognition of need, along with the ability to work creatively with young people, are skills that one would expect. However, this combined with the non-judgemental attitude of staff, their genuine compassion and deep desire and commitment to get the best outcome for any young person in their care indicates why this home's standard of care is rated so highly.

Young people attend the on-site school, which overlaps seamlessly to provide a 24-hour curriculum. The school has an excellent record of positively re-engaging young people who may have missed long periods of formal education. Attendance is excellent, and the educational progress achieved by young people replicates the progress they make in other areas of their lives, which is outstanding. This is reflected in the numbers achieving well in GCSE and A levels.

The arrangements made to promote young people's health continue to be outstanding. Everyday health needs continue to be addressed effectively, and all young people are registered with community-based facilities. Young people also have access to specialist staff who are employed to work within the home. For example, speech and language, psychological and psychiatric services are available on-site for those who need them. Additionally, more specialist services are accessed through the strong links that the home has with local mental health services.

The promotion of health remains strong, and a range of initiatives are in place to encourage young people to adopt a healthier lifestyle. For example, visiting professionals provide guidance and advice to young people in areas such as sexual health, drugs and alcohol misuse. An extensive activity programme, which promotes fitness and exercise as well as healthy eating, is well embedded into daily life. This has transformed a number of young people from those unwilling to walk anywhere into those who take part regularly in fell racing and other outdoor pursuits.

As well as staff who advocate effectively on behalf of young people, the home has both an independent listener and a representative from a professional advocacy service visiting the home regularly. The services of the professional advocate are financed by the home itself. These services give young people a choice of people to confide in who can, if necessary, promote the views of young people in forums, in which they can sometimes feel inhibited.

Consultation between young people and staff is an area of strength. Formal young people's meetings have been rescheduled so that anything raised can be fed directly into the following staff meeting. This enables decisions to be made quickly. In addition,

regular meetings take place during and at the end of each school day, giving young people further opportunities to make choices and suggestions. Young people are happy with the levels of consultation. For example, one young person described how a certain brand of yoghurt is now stocked, following a request made during a young person's meeting.

Developing independence skills with a view to future transition remains an area of strength. Social skills develop and social networks expand as young people grow, mature and develop greater self-confidence. The ability to move into the home's own semi-independence unit, located in the community, enhances the process of independence. The experiences gained by young people during their time spent in the home and school are often life changing. This gives them confidence and ambition for their own futures along with the ability, skills and resilience to move into adulthood. As a result, young people's prospects for the future are much improved and enhanced, compared to their predicted outcomes when first admitted.

The environment that young people live in is purposely of low stimulus to meet their needs. However, the overall standards of repair, fixtures, decor and equipment are of a high standard. A rolling programme to decorate and refurbish the home is ongoing, with the lounge area and three bedrooms having been completed. Following requests from young people, Sky television has been installed, which is proving to be popular. All bedrooms are single occupancy and personalised to suit the taste of the occupant. Young people are relaxed, comfortable and at ease within their surroundings.

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

Although not tested since the previous inspection with any formal referrals, the safeguarding procedures adopted by the home continue to keep young people safe. Strong contacts with the external services charged with keeping young people safe are in place, allowing for a swift multi-agency response should a safeguarding issue arise. Staff training is refreshed regularly, and those senior staff named as safeguarding leads are fully trained to the appropriate level. Responses from young people, parents and other professionals confirmed that they feel that the home is a safe place.

The management of behaviour is outstanding. Staff have a full understanding of why each young person behaves in a certain way and can equate behaviour with training and advice received, based on theoretical input. This is helped by having psychological services on site. Young people quickly accept the boundaries and structure that the home provides so that any initial unrest resulting in serious behavioural issues reduces quickly. As a result, young people prosper in an environment in which they feel safe and respond positively to the strong and trusting relationships that they develop with staff, their peers and others who live in the local community.

Behavioural incidents, which include those requiring physical intervention, are managed effectively. Following an incident, debriefing sessions with young people and staff give opportunities to explore each incident to see if lessons can be learned and whether the incident could have been handled differently. Senior staff monitor incidents effectively,

looking for indicators, trends or patterns, so that strategies to manage behaviour can be adapted appropriately. This helps to improve practice, aid consistency and reduce the number of incidents taking place.

Clearly defined boundaries, along with consistent routines, help young people to feel secure. They live in a non-punitive environment in which reward exceeds sanction. Bullying is taken seriously, and staff act proactively to stop and address issues of bullying. This adds to young people's sense of security. For them, bullying is not an area of concern.

Young people going missing from the home is not a common occurrence, although should it happen, the home has clear, strong procedures in place that staff follow. Work is undertaken with young people about keeping themselves safe in the community. For example, recently the home had representatives from the local police come in to speak with young people and provide advice on this matter. Records are clear and up to date, although the recording template has no specific section for recording return interviews.

Staff retention is good. Longer-serving staff are being rechecked regularly to ensure their continued suitability, which is deemed to be an example of good practice. Recruitment and clearance procedures are thorough and meet with regulatory requirement and current guidance. This ensures that young people are being looked after only by staff who have been suitably cleared and recruited.

The home has excellent systems in place that are linked to keeping everyone safe. For example, detailed risk assessments that identify risks both around the campus and in the community are in place. They are reviewed and updated regularly, which keeps them current. Appropriate service contracts are in place to ensure that safety equipment is well maintained, which adds to the levels of safety in the home.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The home benefits from having an experienced and suitably qualified registered manager who has been in post for some years. She is well supported by an equally experienced senior staff team. Collectively, they have the experience, knowledge and confidence to challenge others to ensure the best possible outcome for the young people in their care.

The organisation and management of the home is totally child focused. Staff and the management team work together cohesively, demonstrating a team-centred approach that is beneficial to young people regarding the consistency of care that they receive. The morale of staff is high, and happiness and warmth is evident throughout the home, which creates a happy and positive environment for young people to live in.

Staff feel well supported by senior staff. They are committed to the ethos, culture and working practices that have developed in the home over the years. For example, young people's needs are put first, and staff are prepared to work extra or flexibly so that

young people's needs can be met. The formal programme of supervision and appraisal takes place consistently. Young people are consulted and included in the staff appraisal process, which is an example of outstanding practice. Informal support is part of the culture developed in the home. Communication levels between staff are high, enabling them to be well organised. For example, this is evident in the way that staff are deployed around the home.

There are clear expectations placed on staff to complete the core staff training programme. The programme develops and refreshes skills as well as providing training in more specialist areas or areas that are of current concern. For example, all but the newest staff have completed training in radicalisation, and e-safety training is a recurring theme. As a result, staff learn and hone skills that allow them to meet the changing needs of young people.

The monitoring of the home, both internally and externally, is excellent. Internally, senior staff have various monitoring systems in place which are used to identify areas of strength and areas to be developed. This information cascades into other areas of planning, resulting in the creation of written development and workforce plans. These high-quality documents provide managers with a clear vision that links into developing practice and improving outcomes for young people.

The home has a good record of compliance, although at the previous inspection no requirements or recommendations were made. However, since then the manager has introduced a number of new initiatives designed to develop practice and improve the environment for young people. For example, a rolling programme to upgrade decor and refurbish the home is ongoing, links to improve community involvement have been created, and the development of meetings for young people now align with staff meetings, which means that requests or concerns raised can be acted on more quickly.

This is a home that has been outstanding for some time. One reason for this is the willingness and ability to critically review and then improve practice. The stability of both the senior and staff team enable long-term planning to come to fruition. The overall result is that young people benefit from being in long-term, stable placements in which their changing needs over the years are met. Strong relationships form, and staff take pride in the progress that young people make, just as their parents do.

## **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 difference 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 who 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:** SC066821

**Provision sub-type:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** Cambian Whinfell School Ltd

**Registered provider address:** 4th Floor, Waterfront Building, Chancellor's Road, Hammersmith Embankment, London EC1Y

**Responsible individual:** Nadine Williams

**Registered manager:** Tracy Brookes

### Inspector(s)

Graham Robinson, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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