

2611190

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home is registered by Ofsted to provide residential care for up to 20 young people aged between eight and 18 years old with an autistic spectrum disorder diagnosis.

The home shares the same site as a separately registered school provision. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2022

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: This is the first inspection of this service as a children's home. The home was registered with Ofsted on 8 January 2021 and has previously been registered as a residential special school.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have made progress from their starting points at the home. Some of this progress derives from the positive relationships that children have with staff. A core group of staff have an excellent understanding of the children's needs. One child said, 'Staff saved me, I don't know where I would be without them. The support they have given me has helped me to make progress that I didn't think was possible.'

There is evidence of regular and effective multi-agency working. A social worker said, 'The home has been nothing short of amazing.' Staff ensure that children understand that they have made a commitment to them. This is particularly important for the children who have previously experienced disruption in their care and education.

Most children are engaged in education. Children with poor histories of educational engagement are supported to learn and achieve qualifications. With encouragement from staff, most children now aspire to engage in further education and/or training. When children have difficulties in education, there is a strong response from care and education staff to find solutions and re-engage children.

Care staff also have strong and effective working relationships with the service's clinical support team. This multi-disciplinary approach significantly improves the support that children receive to improve their emotional health and well-being.

Children's views are gathered regularly. Children feel that they are listened to and valued. Children say that they can confide in staff. Children have nurturing and supportive relationships with staff, who connect with children through shared interests and activities. Staff seek children's views through questionnaires and key-worker sessions. However, recorded key-worker sessions are infrequent. As a result, staff are not always capturing the work they do with children.

Children know how to make a complaint and can identify a trusted adult that they would speak to if they had any concerns. Complaints made by children are thoroughly investigated and children are kept apprised of the process.

Children are well supported to see their family and other people who matter to them. Staff do all they can to ensure that visits and contact arrangements run smoothly and that children have good experiences. When there are unforeseen changes or difficulties, staff support children well to adapt.

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

Children feel safe at this home. They have developed good relationships with staff. The quality of these relationships means that children have a sense of stability and security in the home. Children feel confident to share their views, wishes and feelings with staff.

Staff have a good understanding of children's safety needs. However, risk assessments do not always provide staff with clear guidance on how to manage identified risks. Risk assessments relating to children's internet use do not provide staff with the level of detail that they might require to effectively monitor children's online activity. Despite this, there have been no identified incidents where children's online safety has been compromised.

Staff demonstrate calmness and resilience when responding to behaviours that challenge. The use of physical intervention is minimal and only used as a last resort when children are putting themselves or others at risk. Managers check records of physical intervention to ensure that staff practice is safe and appropriate. Staff are alert to behavioural triggers and respond accordingly to support children. This has led to a reduction in challenging behaviours, self-harm and physical interventions for a number of children.

The provider takes a robust response to complaints. When complaints are made, they are fully investigated. The home's independent visitor provided good oversight of complaint responses. An independent investigator has also been commissioned to investigate issues when appropriate. This demonstrates an open, transparent approach. Staff learn from complaints and use complaint investigation findings positively to improve their practice.

When medication administration errors are made, the manager has been quick to investigate each incident. He has made changes to practice and ensured that staff are appropriately retrained to avoid a reoccurrence.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is experienced and skilled. He has worked hard to improve the service. The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and challenges for the service. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has caused difficulties in the recruitment and retention of a consistent staff group, the manager has successfully maintained a core group of skilled staff. The manager and responsible individual have a development plan in place to address the future development of the service. This includes bolstering the staff team.

Staff have felt supported during the COVID-19 pandemic and have remained committed to offering positive care and support to children. A staff member said, 'I can go to the manager whenever I want, he is always here for me. I feel really supported and my opinion is valued.'

Staff have regular team meetings. Managers use these meetings well to provide guidance and support to staff. The manager briefs staff on current research in topics such as contextualised safeguarding and risk management.

Equality and diversity is embedded into practice at this home. Managers have ensured that staff understand the importance of seeing each child as an individual. This is done with great sensitivity, allowing children to flourish without feeling judged or discriminated against.

Although supervision is of a good quality, it has not always been provided regularly enough, particularly to team leaders and house managers.

Transition planning can be complicated for some children. Not all children have been offered independent advocacy to ensure their voices are heard when plans are made for their futures.

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
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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; and</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This relates to the quality of recording of each child’s risk assessment. Specifically, there should be clear guidance on what steps staff take to reduce risks. In addition, risk assessments relating on online safety should clearly outline how staff should reduce potential risks.</p>	4 March 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>This relates specifically to ensuring that staff receive regular supervision.</p>	4 March 2022

Recommendations

- All children must have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Looked-after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their

care and lives. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)

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: 2611190

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar
EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Mark Cole

Registered manager: Christopher Pearce

Inspector

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector

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