

# SC066821

Registered provider: Cambian Whinfell School Limited

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 for a maximum of 14 males. The home's statement of purpose states that care is provided for children who have a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome or autism spectrum disorder and possible accompanying conditions, which may include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, pathological demand avoidance and mild to moderate learning difficulty.

Accommodation is split, with most children living on the main site and facilities for some children working towards independence living a short distance away. However, there are currently no children living in one part of the accommodation.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in July 2023. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 14 to 16 November 2023

**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      requires improvement to be good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 1 November 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/11/2022	Full	Good
03/11/2021	Full	Good
18/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
29/01/2019	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Prior to the visit a complaint was received about the operation of the setting and the staffing compliment. This was considered as part of the inspection activity.

There are eight children currently living in the home. Three children have moved out and into semi-independent accommodation. Recently, three new children have moved into the home. Overall, there are well-planned arrangements in place to help support children to move in and out of the home in line with their individual needs. Assessments are completed to consider compatibility. Staff are building relationships with the new children. Children spoke openly about the challenges they had faced due to another child becoming unsettled. This led to staff being unable to meet the child's needs and the placement coming to an end. One child said, 'The home is much quieter now and he scored it 9 out of 10.'

Since the last inspection, there has been some improvements to the redecoration of the home. The kitchen, games room and lounge all have a much homelier feel, and one child's interest in photography has been embraced, which brightened up the lounge and added additional personalisation.

Children are supported to develop the independence skills they may need at different stages of their lives. For example, they are learning how to travel independently, wash their clothes and can complete jobs, such as washing the home's vehicle to earn additional monies. One professional said, 'I am pleased [name of child] is being encouraged to be more independent in the community.'

Education is a strength of the home. All children have good attendance and make good progress in school. Some children are taking part in work experience placements and enjoying a range of outdoor learning opportunities. During the inspection, the members of the careers service were discussing future aspirations with the children.

The manager and staff ensure that they support children to access specialist external agencies, and they encourage them to attend all necessary appointments. As a result, all children's health needs are met.

Children benefit from a range of activities and out of school clubs. One child was proud of his participation in a recent remembrance parade with the army cadets. Children are also given many new experiences, such as a recent holiday to France, ice skating, visits to trampoline parks and climbing walls. These memories are captured in albums and give children a valuable record of their childhood journey. Achievements are celebrated and displayed around the home. One child spoke with pride about his excitement at being selected to attend the company's upcoming arts and crafts award ceremony.

Staff support children to spend time with their families and people who are important to them. Children are helped to contribute to decision-making about these arrangements, and staff gain their views. Furthermore, children's meetings take place regularly, and children are encouraged to contribute to the agenda. This helps them feel valued.

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

Children's risks and vulnerabilities are understood by staff and risk assessments are regularly updated.

There have been occasions where consequences used have been financial and not restorative in nature. This does not help children to understand the consequences of their behaviour nor help them learn to make positive choices. There are gaps in the consistency of oversight from the registered manager regarding the effectiveness of the measure used as per regulation.

On some occasions staff have not used de-escalation strategies in line with children's plans and there have been some occasions where the police have been called to the home to manage children's behaviours.

Recruitment checks are robust. All new staff are suitably vetted following safer recruitment practices prior to starting work in the home. This promotes safe working practices.

Children know how to make a complaint and can identify staff they can talk to about any concerns. When complaints do occur, the manager ensures that these are thoroughly investigated, clearly recorded, and promptly responded to. Leaders and managers take effective action in response to concerns about staff conduct and complaints. Records in relation to incidents include an immediate response to serious concerns raised. Following internal investigations, disciplinary action was appropriately taken in all cases.

Incidents of children going missing from care are rare. When this has happened, staff respond appropriately. Staff go out looking for children, and information is shared with police and the relevant placing authority. Independent return home interviews are conducted to give children the opportunity to share any important safeguarding information.

Fire safety is prioritised. There is an up-to-date fire risk assessment, and each child has their own individual personal evacuation plan. Recently, one child had a visit from the fire service to help him understand the importance of using fire equipment appropriately.

Children are supported to understand the risks posed to them when using the internet. They have all been involved in drawing up an electrical agreement. Each one is individualised in line with their ages and abilities. These are effective in monitoring any concerns raised. Staff use key-work sessions with children to discuss

their understanding. As a result, children are kept safe when using the internet and social media.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

There is a new manager in post. She was previously the deputy manager in the home. She is well supported by the responsible individual and deputy care manager. Together, they are passionate and committed to developing systems in the home and ensuring positive outcomes for children.

Children have experienced significant changes in the staff team since the last inspection. New staff have been recruited alongside the manager and responsible individual. Staff and managers have a good understanding of children's needs. Where agency staff have been used, managers request the same workers to ensure that there is a consistent approach for children. Children spoke highly about the relationships they have with the staff. Furthermore, there has been some children who have moved on and remain in touch with staff.

Managers monitoring and oversight are not always effective in identifying shortfalls. For example, some incident records do not always contain accurate information, and the manager has failed to identify shortfalls in some records despite reviewing the documentation. Furthermore, managers do not always conduct reviews when serious incidents occur. This is a missed opportunity for managers and staff to discuss any lessons that can be learned, and to ensure that staff practice is appropriate.

On occasions, language used in records is subjective, institutional and is not helpful to describe children's experiences. The manager recognises this is an area of development, and staff are currently receiving training in respect of this.

Children's records do not include all relevant documentation from placing authorities. The manager should use appropriate means to escalate this so that staff have the most up-to-date information in relation to children.

Staff receive structured induction and a range of training to meet the needs of children. Furthermore, staff say they work well as a team and receive regular supervision. Staff are given the opportunity to talk about their practice and development.

Partnership working is effective. Staff ensure that there is good communication with professionals and that they are kept regularly updated. Feedback from professionals is positive. One social worker said, 'I am pleased with the social skills and independence [name of child] has gained since coming to the home.' Another professional said, '[Name of child] is making phenomenal progress; staff are attuned to the needs of the children and always very welcoming.'

## 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, The 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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mutual respect and trust;</li> <li>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</li> <li>positive responses to other children and adults.</li> </ul> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</li> <li>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</li> <li>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; and</li> <li>understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(ix))</li> </ul> <p>This specifically relates to the use of police to manage children’s behaviours and language used by staff in records.</p>	<p>29 December 2023</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</li> <li>promotes their welfare.</li> </ul>	<p>29 December 2023</p>

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that the manager has thorough oversight of children’s records, including any incidents and she leads the home to ensure that staff are nurturing in their approach.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; and</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure.(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(v)(vii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that all records of consequences are proportionate, and the manager has commented on their effectiveness.</p>	29 December 2023

## Recommendations

- The registered person should evidence what they have done to escalate and challenge the local authority when there are gaps in children’s plans. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 11, paragraph 2.3)

## **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:** SC066821

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

**Registered provider:** Cambian Whinfell School Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Patricia Sandham

**Registered manager:** Jennifer Carradus

## Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

Alexandra Pearson, Social Care Inspector

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