

# 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 and education for a maximum of 14 boys. Care is provided for children who have a diagnosis of autism and associated conditions, which may include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The home has a main site and a second site for children working towards independence. At the time of the inspection, there were seven children living in the two homes. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on the two sites.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2023.

### Inspection dates: 10 to 12 December 2024

**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:** 14 November 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## cent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
14/11/2023	Full	Good
01/11/2022	Full	Good
03/11/2021	Full	Good
18/02/2020	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Many of the children have lived in the home for over 12 months. Since the last inspection, two children have moved on in a planned way and had the opportunity to take part in leaving events. The experiences and achievements of children moving on are captured on video and given to them as a memento of their time in the home. Children moving into the home are supported. One child who recently moved in is settled and making excellent progress from his starting point.

Children receive exceptional individualised care from the staff. The dedicated and stable team know the children extremely well. One external professional said, 'This is the best placement [name of child] has ever had. He is making significant progress in all areas of his life.' One child said, 'It's 10 out of 10 here. I love the food, I like my room and I have my own bathroom so I can blast music loudly.'

The home has recently been redecorated and children's bedrooms are personalised, which provides a homely feel. Staff are attentive and show genuine warmth towards children, which gives the feeling of a family environment. The manager has further plans to improve the home by modernising a downstairs shower room.

Over the summer, children enjoyed a holiday together. Staff made superb use of social stories to help each child decide what clothing and equipment they would need. Scrapbooks and photos on display around the home capture memories of the children's experiences. Staff help children pursue their hobbies and interests and build links to their community. One child who loves photography has recently helped a local business improve their website with new images. Another child said, 'Staff have helped me join a local football team.'

Children's health needs are well met. They all have up-to-date assessments and care plans. Staff use highly effective key-work sessions to help children understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Staff are innovative in encouraging good oral hygiene, with the use of teeth-cleaning parties and letters from the tooth fairy. This means children have fun while learning and staying healthy.

All children are making significant progress in school. They are currently working with the National Trust to complete an education award which builds resilience and confidence. The children are also working with a former Olympian on a social action project and two children are doing work experience in the community.

Child-led discussions provide opportunities for children to have their wishes and feelings heard.

Children are supported to develop their independence skills. Staff have helped children to budget and shop independently and one child has been learning how to use public transport.

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

Leaders and managers work with external agencies to ensure that there is a strong and proactive response to safeguarding matters and any allegations received are thoroughly investigated. Since the last inspection, an anonymous letter has been sent to the home sharing safeguarding concerns. Leaders and managers took all necessary action and increased security measures to ensure the safety of the children and staff was paramount.

Staff recognise the signs that indicate a child may be at risk of harm. Additionally, they have received further safeguarding training from the local authority safeguarding team. As a result, they understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children.

Risk management plans are regularly reviewed and provide staff with clear guidance. Staff understand the risks around the children's vulnerabilities. When children have gone missing, staff search for them in the community. There have been a couple of occasions when children have not had someone independent to talk to on their return to the home. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Each child has their own behaviour support plan. Staff have the expertise to support children to regulate their emotions and behaviours. They use their secure relationships with the children to manage difficult situations and behaviour safely. This ensures any incidents are well managed. When restraint is used, intervention is minimal and is used only as a last resort. Children involved in incidents can discuss and review the strategies they feel work best for them.

Children say they feel safe. They have age-appropriate access to the internet. Staff hold quizzes and have meaningful discussions with children to help them understand the risks associated with social media.

Children say they get on well and are encouraged to accept each other's differences. This means any disagreements are quickly resolved. Children say sorry by their actions, including making drinks, cleaning the car and writing letters of apology. This ensures that consequences are restorative and help children learn from their actions.

The arrangements for medication are safe and effective. During the children's holiday, a medication error occurred. The manager has completed a robust investigation to understand what happened. A lessons-learned exercise was undertaken and shared with staff to consider what improvements could be made to practice.

Staff are recruited following safer recruitment practices, including all necessary checks. This means children are cared for by individuals who are safe and suitable.

The staff prioritise fire safety in the home. Each child has a personal emergency evacuation plan. Staff creatively and innovatively use role play and exercises with children to increase their awareness of the dangers of fire.

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

The manager is suitably qualified and has worked in the home for several years. Staff say they feel valued and listened to by the manager, who is supported by the responsible individual and a deputy manager. Together, they are highly aspirational for children and staff.

Leaders and managers work hard to drive improvements in the home. There are excellent auditing tools used by the manager to regularly track progress in the home. The manager and staff consistently reflect on the strengths and areas for further development of their practice.

Staff morale is high and staff love working in the home. They say they are proud to be part of a hard-working team who have the children's best interests at the centre of their practice.

Supervision is regular and of high quality and records are detailed and informative. There is a reflective culture that underpins staff practice. Staff have received their annual appraisals, where they set goals and objectives for the year ahead. Weekly team meetings and effective handovers provide staff with excellent opportunities to share important information and generate new ideas.

There is a strong therapeutic approach embedded in staff practice. The company's in-house therapist spends time with staff to increase their knowledge. This collaborative way of working helps children to thrive. The manager provides ongoing opportunities to increase staff's professional development. There is a range of bespoke training to meet the needs of the children. Managers use workshops and research-based practice to increase staff understanding of the language of autism, emotional well-being and parenting models.

Overall, records are completed to an excellent standard. However, inspectors found some minor issues with recording. For example, records should clearly detail all information from staff debriefs following the use of restraint. Furthermore, children's views should focus on how the child felt about the measure. This is an area for improvement and does not impact the quality of care.

External feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Professionals said communication is 'brilliant'. Staff support children to spend time with those people who are important in their lives. One parent said, 'The care and nurture shown to my child by staff is exceptional.' Another said, 'I cannot believe the change in him. He is in an environment where he can just be himself. I thank the staff for changing my boy's life.'

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful and clear recording. Records should clearly detail all information from staff debriefs following the use of restraint. Furthermore, children's views in relation to staff practice should focus on how the child felt about the measure. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

### **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  
Suzanne Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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