

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 autism spectrum disorders. Accommodation is split, with most young people living on the main site, and facilities for some to experience a semi-independent living situation located a short distance away.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 January 2019

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

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

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.

The manager was registered with HMCI in 2013.

Date of last inspection: 15 May 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/05/2017	Full	Outstanding
12/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/05/2016	Full	Outstanding
08/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
Specifically, for children who show certain high-level risks, consideration should be broader and cover potential as well as known risks. Additionally, actions identified from the review of restrictive physical interventions to reduce risks should be individualised and specific, and actions identified to minimise risks in young people's risk assessments should be clear and specific.
- Children must be listened to and enabled to report any allegations at the earliest opportunity. Staff should report any allegation of abuse immediately to a senior manager within the home. Any allegation of harm or abuse must be addressed in line with the home's child protection policy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.17)
In particular, where any allegation is made, managers should seek advice from the designated officer before proceeding with their own investigation, and, where external agencies are involved in investigating an incident, an outcome should be sought and conveyed to the child at the earliest opportunity.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people at the home make exceptional progress from their starting points in many areas. All the young people placed have autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and at the beginning of their placements often display highly challenging, ritualised or withdrawn behaviours. As their placements progress, their ability to socialise, communicate and self-regulate improve dramatically. Feedback from parents and external agencies about progression for young people and their experience of living at the home consistently affirms that the young people are making remarkable progress and benefiting greatly from living in the home. Young people presented as positive and mature and freely spoke about their enjoyable experiences.

Young people's emotional and physical health needs are very well met by the multi-disciplinary team in the home. Psychologists use an assessment tool which, although used throughout the wider company, has been specifically modified for this home. This tool shows evidence that young people are making progress in all aspects of their emotional health and that their progression is continuous from their starting points.

Staff supporting young people are both knowledgeable and capable. Young people stated that they have close and supportive relationships with staff and feel that they genuinely care. Observations of staff and young people together evidence the high level of skill staff possess in keeping young people calm, focused and happy. Staff spoken to were able to show an in-depth understanding of each individual young person and how they are able to meet their unique support and care needs.

Young people benefit from weekly 'therapeutic outdoor learning' sessions, allowing them to try different outdoor activities that many have not previously experienced. Some young people have excelled in the activities they have been offered, and one young person has shown such an interest in his chosen sport that he now has a part-time job in that area. Not only has this provided him with positive self-worth and a small income, it has also opened a social circle to him outside of the home and the school.

Many young people were able to go on a ski trip to Bulgaria last winter, and this was such a success that a further trip is planned this year. At the beginning of their placements, it is unlikely that any of the young people would have been able to manage such a disruption to their routine or the challenges of travelling abroad to try a new sport.

All young people are in education, and many successfully sit GCSE exams. Some are taking A levels and have clear plans and aspirations for their futures. The school and home environment together give a level of consistency and a holistic care package that greatly benefits young people. One parent commented, 'Academic-wise, he has made massive progress; [his] self-confidence and well-being [have] improved. Overall, [he has] made progress and is happy [and] much calmer when at home. [We have] not experienced any violence since [he has been at the home].'

Many young people have accessed local work experience opportunities that help to prepare them for their future. Some have been offered employment resulting from these placements, and one young person may potentially have secured an apprenticeship. This strengthens links to the wider community and assists young people to positively integrate. One young person commented, 'The best part is going on TOL (therapeutic outdoor learning). I really enjoy being outdoors. I particularly enjoy archery, which I now do after school at a club in [name of town]. I really enjoyed work experience at the Art Mill. I have been bought a moped to try and fix in my spare time. Overall, I am happy and feel I am now learning and being challenged more.' Young people at the smaller home are all working towards independence and are supported to learn the skills they will need when they progress from the home.

Young people's care is very highly individualised, and staff have an excellent understanding of what works best with each young person. Inspectors reviewed some very good examples of key work sessions with young people, which were carried out in different ways to ensure that young people got the best out of them. One example is a young person being assisted to draw a spider diagram to help him understand what things he is good at and what things he needs help with. Young people also share their

views through regular young people's meetings and have, additionally, given feedback in a survey.

When young people have specific needs, staff are trained in that area. For example, in anticipation of a sad event for a young person, the staff team has been trained to support him through bereavement. This is an example of the home anticipating potential difficulties for young people and being proactive in ensuring that staff have the appropriate skill set to help and support them through difficult times.

Young people's successes are celebrated. Their unique talents are acknowledged and nurtured, and staff always ensure that they are given opportunities to try different activities to develop their interest in any activity or hobby that appeals to them. There is a vast range of activities on offer to young people to ensure that any and every interest is being nurtured. Examples include youth club, choir, church, paddle boarding, photography, metal detecting, climbing and many more.

One social worker's evaluation of the placement was, 'The placement is fantastic for [name of child], who is very settled and happy. Communication is very good in that information is exchanged on a regular, weekly basis. [There are] lots of structured activity on offer and links with the local community. [There are] really good relationships built up between [name of child] and the staff. No concerns at all surrounding the provision. I'm very pleased with [name of child]'s progress since admission.'

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

Safeguarding practice in the home is robust. Young people are safe. They reported feeling safe, and external agencies and parents confirmed that risks for young people are well managed.

There is a strong focus on behaviour management, with good systems in place for identifying patterns and trends, including the frequency of physical interventions used to protect young people from harming themselves or others. Actions identified to reduce further occurrences, however, tend to be generic and not individualised to meet the complexities of their needs. Staff are highly skilled at de-escalating young people when their mood or behaviours become heightened. They have good understanding of what works for each individual young person and what triggers to avoid. Staff were observed de-escalating situations in a very calm and proactive manner, helping young people regain control over their emotions and behaviour.

Staff demonstrate good insight into young people's specific vulnerabilities and risks. Risk assessments are individualised and updated as appropriate, and there are suitable measures in place to safeguard young people.

Staff do not always see the potential risk of young people self-harming in other ways when there is a known history of suicide ideation. The strategies identified to minimise

risks such as self-harming behaviour and access to the internet can be too generalised and do not explicitly set out what staff expectations are.

Missing from home is not a frequent occurrence due to the high levels of supervision and the strong positive relationships that exist between staff and young people. Young people who are at risk from going missing have individual missing from home care plans, and there is a detailed protocol for staff to follow should the young person go missing.

Procedures in response to allegations made by young people are usually followed in the correct manner. However, in one instance an internal investigation was carried out prior to any referral being made to the local area designated officer for safeguarding, thereby compromising possible action of external agencies.

Staff carry out direct work with young people to improve their understanding of risks, including stranger danger, cyber bullying, social media and extremism. As young people progress, they are enabled to take age-appropriate risks in line with their developing independence.

There is a wide range of training available to staff to improve their understanding of risks and develop their ability to manage young people's risks. Among other issues, training includes child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and county lines.

Prior to the admission, managers undertake detailed impact risk assessments of each young person to identify whether their needs can be met and whether any risks they pose can be safely managed. This ensures that on admission young people's risks are prepared for and that they do not have a detrimental impact on other young people in the home. If young people's risks escalate to a very high level, managers at the home recognise this and plan with the young person's placing authority for termination of the placement.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home benefits from a stable and skilled management team that has high aspirations for young people and high expectations of staff. Managers show commitment to providing the highest level of individualised care as well as drive and determination to continue to develop and improve the service. Managers are keen to receive feedback and are open to acting on any identified areas for improvement or development. A clear and ambitious development plan is in place.

Staff consulted as part of this inspection spoke confidently about the young people's care needs. They clearly have a strong understanding of the policies and procedures and feel committed to the positive ethos of the home. Staff feel supported and reported that they receive regular supervision and training to carry out their roles effectively. New staff spoke positively of the induction process and feel they are well prepared to work with the young people. It is evident that staff have the capacity to build highly positive relationships with young people and thereby get the best from them in return. There is

an extensive training package in place to support staff, with a focus on the research-endorsed psychological and emotional needs of the young people.

Staff are highly engaged in continuing to develop and improve the home. Managers seek their feedback regarding what is working well and what aspirations they are working towards. Managers also work with staff to embed the quality standards into individual practice with each young person.

Managers have an exceptionally good knowledge of the progression young people make while at the home and can demonstrate the positive impact the home has on each young person's progress and future life chances. On the rare occasions when young people are not making good progress, the home understands and acknowledges this and ends placements if that is in the best interests of the young person.

Managers spoke with confidence about the home's strengths and are able to identify areas for development or progression. They are committed to continuous improvement in the service to ensure that young people have the best possible outcomes and that they leave the home as well prepared for their next steps as they possible can be.

The home is properly staffed and has the resources to meet the needs of the young people. Most staff are qualified, and those that are not are enrolled onto the relevant courses. The staff team has a broad range of skills, and managers are keen to tap into these to provide a range of opportunities and interests for young people.

The multi-disciplinary team model works collaboratively to provide consistency and stability. Cohesive care, where there is communication between the different agencies and individuals involved, is considered paramount. External agencies are also involved appropriately and included in care planning for young people.

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: SC066821

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Whinfell School Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Christopher Strong

Registered manager: Tracy Brookes

Inspectors

Charlie Bamber and Michael Charnley, social care inspectors

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