

SC482294

Registered provider: Cambian Asperger Syndrome Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to 29 children with learning disabilities. Children are accommodated in five houses and all the children attend the school that is located on the same site. Care is provided to children with a primary diagnosis of an autism spectrum condition. The home offers a flexible package and provides care on a weekly, termly or annual boarding basis, depending on the child's needs.

There has been no registered manager since October 2020.

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 June 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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: 28 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/09/2021	Full	Good
07/06/2021	Full	Inadequate
03/07/2019	Full	Good
20/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Managers and the staff provide the children with encouragement and opportunities to have a strong voice. Staff involve the children in their day-to-day care and decisions about the home. Through the staff's support, the children develop a greater sense of agency and self-esteem. As a result, the children learn to recognise that they can positively influence the environment around them.

Staff encourage the children to learn about current issues, such as the conflict in Ukraine. The children took part in an associated charity event to help raise their awareness and some funds. As a result of this event, and other charity activities, the children work in collaboration, and develop empathy and an understanding of wider issues that occur in the world.

Staff provide a range of fun activities that help children to stay fit, be creative and develop social skills. Children attend a range of clubs and activities in the local community, such as football clubs and dance classes. This encourages the children to follow healthy lifestyles and helps to develop their social skills.

Children attend the on-site school. They speak positively about school and say that they enjoy attending. Staff work creatively with the school staff to encourage and support the children to sustain or regain their confidence in education.

Staff are aspirational for the children and are proactive in exploring options that will help them to reach their full potential. For one child, this has involved the staff arranging and supporting a work experience opportunity in a London law firm.

Staff work in close partnership with the children's families. Staff are thoughtful about the changes and adjustments that the children need to make, such as preparing them for interviews at college and living more independently. This helps to create a strong team around each child, and ensures that they get the resources and support that they need to succeed now and in the future.

Children have access to specialist help from the in-house therapeutic team. The individualised support available means that the children's emotional needs can be quickly identified, and that they are provided with support to help improve their well-being. The home and the beautifully kept gardens are maintained in a way that promotes the children's health and well-being.

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

The responsible individual and managers have established a proactive culture for the protection of the children. Daily briefing meetings mean that managers from the home, school and therapeutic services share information about the most-vulnerable children and any safeguarding concerns. This allows for an instant overview so that

the managers can spot patterns and trends and take proactive action to address any areas of concern.

Staff are clear about, and follow, procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of the children. Child protection concerns are shared with appropriate safeguarding agencies so that prompt decisions can be made to protect children.

In-house maintenance workers undertake safeguarding and refresher training, and visitors are closely monitored when on site. This thoroughness reinforces the safeguarding culture that is embedded in the home of working to ensure that everyone is safe and accountable.

A shortfall was identified concerning a television found in one of the homes that had the potential for adult channels to be accessed overnight. This was addressed during the inspection.

Most children are considerate of each other. However, bullying is a problem for some of the children. One child said he felt unsafe because of bullying. Staff challenge unkind behaviour and bullying when they see it. Yet, this is not always effective as incidents of bullying continue to happen. This is, in part, because the staff lack consistent strategies to address bullying.

Managers and the staff promote an inclusive ethos at the home. Staff are mindful of children's individuality and celebrate diversity.

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

There has been no registered manager at the home since 2020. A manager is in place and has been appointed. However, leaders have not ensured that her application to Ofsted has been completed promptly to ensure that the regulatory expectations are met.

Leaders and managers continue to face significant challenges in the recruitment of suitable staff and are reliant on agency and bank staff to work across the homes. The continued reliance on agency and bank staff reduces the stability and support that some of the children receive. Nevertheless, the managers ensure that regular agency and bank staff work with the same children alongside experienced permanent staff, and this mitigates the potential impact on the children.

There is a good range of training available for the staff to equip them to protect and meet the needs of the children. In-house training and supervision are extended out to regular agency staff. Consequently, the children are cared for by a staff team that is equipped with the necessary level of knowledge and skills to meet their needs.

The responsible individual and senior leadership team have a good understanding of the home's strengths, as well as the areas requiring further improvement, such as

the need to recruit more permanent staff. There is an ongoing recruitment strategy to address this.

Managers have improved the quality of supervision records to better reflect performance management. Most staff, including the night staff, said that they receive regular supervision that is helpful. However, one relatively new member of staff has not had regular formal supervision to support her learning and development.

There is good management oversight of physical interventions. Each incident is scrutinised, and new learning is taken forward with the staff involved, to ensure safe practice. However, the new online system does not prompt staff to date when the child's welfare and their expressed views are captured. In practice, the children's welfare and views are prioritised and, in most cases, recorded.

The new web-based behaviour-watch system is improving and centralising the home's recording systems. When incidents are logged, automatic emails alert relevant staff to inform and target interventions for the children. However, it is too early to see what impact the new system has made on improving the quality of care as the system is not yet fully embedded in practice.

Leaders and managers have addressed the requirement and recommendations made at the last inspection.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a) (2)(a)(xiii))</p>	<p>18 August 2022</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff skills for safeguarding should include being able to identify signs that children may be at risk. This particularly refers to ensuring that children and adults do not have access to inappropriate adult television content. (‘Guide to the quality standards, including the children’s homes regulations’, page 43, paragraph 9.10)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff receive regular supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the quality standards, including the children’s homes regulations’, page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person must ensure that any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident. (‘Guide to the quality standards, including the children’s homes regulations’, page 50, paragraph 9.60)

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: SC482294

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Cambian Asperger Syndrome Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Alison Priddle

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Anne-Marie Davies, Social Care Inspector
Suzy Lemmy, Social Care Inspector

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