

# SC066897

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to 28 children with learning disabilities. The home forms part of a residential school specialising in care, education and therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder. At the time of the inspection, 27 children were living across the six houses.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2022.

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** **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:** 9 February 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/02/2023	Full	Good
21/06/2021	Full	Outstanding
25/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
22/01/2019	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Children flourish in this home. The care that they receive is individualised and nurturing, which allows them to have happy and fulfilled lives. All children make excellent progress because of the skilled and dedicated staff who help them to try new things, learn and thrive. One parent said, 'We are so grateful that our child gets such fantastic care.'

Children's worlds have been unlocked by communication aids that are used consistently throughout their day. Staff use a variety of ways to help children to communicate their needs, make choices and have a say in how they want to be supported. For example, children use electronic devices to tell staff what they would like to do and how they are feeling. They also use them to send messages and write letters home to their families. One parent said, 'Speaking to my child using his device was a revelation.'

Children attend the school which is situated in the extensive and scenic grounds. There is a strong sense of community. The care, education and therapy staff work exceptionally well as a team to ensure that children's learning and support are continual. This provides a truly joined-up approach. Children's learning and progress are beautifully captured through a range of words, photos and videos.

Children have ample opportunities to join in with a range of activities in the home and the local community. This allows children to have fun with their friends and family, while learning social and independent living skills. Children enjoy eating out at restaurants, going shopping for their own clothes and taking long walks. A favourite activity is visiting the allotment. The allotment provides children with enriching experiences, such as weeding vegetable patches, planting, and collecting eggs from the chickens. Children's family and friends can also join activities. For instance, a festival was held in the grounds. Children and their families enjoyed listening to live bands, trying yoga and experiencing all the other entertainment that was available. These stimulating activities help children to build confidence and have positive experiences.

Children who have recently moved into the home are already making very good progress. Diligent planning ensured that these children settled into the home seamlessly. Interactive videos and well-planned visits support children to become familiar with the home and know what to expect when they move in. Parents are positive about the support that they and their children receive. One parent explained, 'All staff have been extremely supportive and helpful and [name of child] has settled in far better than we could have expected. We are delighted with the care that he receives and feel comfortable with every aspect so far of our experience.'

All other children make significant progress from their starting points. This is because of the skills and innovation of the staff, who make every interaction with children a moment to enjoy and learn from. One child has made so much progress that they were able to manage a shopping trip; a significant achievement that enabled them to choose gifts for their family and friends.

The creative and thoughtful approaches to supporting children to attend health appointments are exceptional. One parent said, 'Without the staff advocating for my child, I've no doubt the planned procedure would have been entirely traumatising for them. We are thankful for the wonderful team wrapped around them.' Medication is generally well managed. Although there have been a small number of medication errors since the last inspection, leaders and managers have responded appropriately. They carried out a comprehensive audit, identified learning and provided additional training for staff.

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

Leaders and managers demonstrate strong professional curiosity when investigating concerns. Safeguarding records are clear and comprehensive. Chronologies demonstrate a clear timeline and the decision-making process. External consultations and peer reviews further guard against insular practice.

Children have warm relationships with staff. They seek them out when they need support, and staff are responsive to this. Staff are committed to the children. They are proud of their successes and know them incredibly well. This enables staff to promptly identify any changes in children's behaviour. The provision is part of a university research community. It participates in specialist research projects that focus on specific methods of behaviour recognition and management. This research informs practice and contributes to the strategies used to meet children's individual needs. This helps children to feel safe and helps to ensure positive outcomes for them.

Weekly risk assessment meetings ensure that safeguarding is a top priority for all staff. Holistic working across the staff teams results in individualised plans to keep the children safe. Any concerns or worries are highlighted, and plans are adapted to meet the ever-changing needs of the children. Staff anticipate children's needs quickly. This has led to a reduction in incidents of children becoming upset and frustrated.

Recruitment processes for new staff are effective. Relevant references are obtained and all gaps in employment are explored. Routine servicing and maintenance ensure that the buildings and grounds are safe. Responsive maintenance teams address any damage or concerns promptly.

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

Leaders and managers have created a culture of learning and reflection. Children feel comfortable to seek them out when needed.

Children are confident to explore the person that they wish to be without fear of discrimination, regardless of their ability, gender or race. Leaders model a culture of mutual respect, which staff and children embrace.

Leaders and managers create a safe environment where children build trust with adults who enable them to take appropriate control of their lives in a group setting. Children who were previously isolated are now able to live in group settings with their peers.

Staff attend customised training that specifically focuses on learning from closed cultures. The home's ethos, aims and strategies in the statement of purpose are fully embedded.

The highly motivated team of staff are managed by team managers who have extensive skills, training and experience. Consequently, children receive care that is of the highest standard.

Leaders and managers have thorough oversight of all aspects of the home. However, the independent visitor routinely visits during the school day. This is a missed opportunity to see the children in their home environment. The reports demonstrate an absence of recommendations to improve the quality of care in line with the regulations. However, leaders and managers recognise this shortfall and intend to make changes to address this immediately.

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

- The registered person should ensure that the independent visitor observes children in their home environment to form an impartial judgement and makes recommendations to improve the quality of the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.8)

## **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:** SC066897

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

**Registered provider:** Cambian Autism Services Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Katherine Landells

**Registered manager:** Kirsty Marsden

## Inspectors

Hannah Cox, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector

Thobekile Bandama, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023