

Children's homes inspection – Full

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| Inspection date | 23/11/2016 |
| Unique reference number | 1227060 |
| Type of inspection | Full |
| Provision subtype | Residential special school |
| Registered provider | Cambian Autism Services Limited |
| Registered provider address | 4th Floor, Waterfront, Hammersmith Embankment, London W6 9RU |

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| Responsible individual | Bethan Davies |
| Registered manager | Rikke McIntosh |
| Inspectors | Michele Hargan Tina Ruffles |

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| Inspection date | 23/11/2016 |
| Previous inspection judgement | N/A |
| Enforcement action since last inspection | None |
| This inspection | |
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are | Good |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good. | |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | Good |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers | Good |

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff build trusting relationships with children and young people.
- Children's and young people's school and college attendance is good and they take part in meaningful work experiences.
- Staff provide children and young people with tailored support, enabling them to take part in a variety of enjoyable activities.
- Young people's safety and well-being improves because staff take effective action to address concerns.
- Young people's accommodation is improved because of major refurbishment.
- Staff and young people benefit from direct access to specialist help including regular consultation with a clinical psychologist and a speech and language and occupational therapist.
- Leadership and management of the home are good.
- A stable and experienced staff team feels well supported by leaders and managers.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person meets 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 must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement | Due date |
|--|------------|
| <p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>(2) In order to meet the protection of children standard, specifically, establish a system to ensure that all staff on duty understand children's and young people's risk assessments and behaviour support plans and are updated about any changes at the beginning of every shift, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> | 28/02/2017 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child within the home, a record is made which includes details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of measure, details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure and the effectiveness and any consequence of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(v)(vii))</p> | 28/02/2017 |

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs. Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

In particular, devise an escalation policy and procedure that makes it clear

when challenges should be made in response to a placing authority's inadequate performance, including bringing matters to the attention of the director of children's services.

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, do not make requests of children and young people to sign numerous forms and documentation when the forms are not child-friendly or accessible for the children and young people receiving care.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to 23 children with learning disabilities and/or emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company and was registered in December 2015.

Recent inspection history

This is the first full inspection of the home.

Inspection Judgements

| | Judgement grade |
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| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are | Good |
| <p>Children and young people make sustained progress over time due to the well-structured daily routines and consistent care provided by a qualified, stable staff team. When talking about her son, one parent said, 'We couldn't have asked for a better place. He has made massive progress. There has been such a big change in him.'</p> <p>Children and young people make positive and sustained relationships with their allocated key workers who have a good understanding of their complex needs, behaviours and traits. Staff provide children and young people with a sense of belonging and stability, resulting in reduced anxiety levels with an improvement in behaviour. A social worker said, 'Any unpredictabilities are managed within the setting so the child or young person can deal with them.'</p> <p>Children and young people have excellent attendance at the on-site school, college training courses and work placements. They make good educational progress towards achieving their goals and targets. Those who previously struggled with going to school are now regularly attending. They benefit from the collaborative working between the residential staff, school staff and the multi-disciplinary team. They actively engage with others, become more confident, their social skills improve and there are increased opportunities for work in the future. Talking about her son who was a school refuser for many years, one parent said, 'Full credit to the staff who turned him around.'</p> <p>In addition, some young people access local community resources and make a worthwhile contribution through volunteer opportunities. These experiences help young people to prepare for adulthood by affording them increased levels of independence. A member of staff said, 'Key work staff and education staff work closely together and that is why it really works.'</p> <p>Staff meet children's and young people's health needs and provide them with good access to health services. The varied, balanced diet that is available meets the cultural and religious needs of particular young people. For example, staff provide halal food for those practising their Muslim faith. A young person said, 'The food's good.'</p> <p>Children and young people benefit from the large grounds and have access to on-site amenities including the mini-gym and sports hall at the school. They enjoy leisure activities in the community and go on holidays with staff. These experiences</p> | |

help to promote children's and young people's social interaction with peers, improve their health and fitness and widen their interests.

The newly established multi-disciplinary team now provides managers with a clinical opinion from the point of referral to the service. The team's involvement during the admission and matching process provides an extremely comprehensive assessment of children's and young people's needs and the environment can be adapted prior to their arrival at the home. The matching process is now thorough and existing children and young people do not face disruption. Newly admitted young people settle more quickly due to this careful planning by the staff team.

Good partnership working and communication between staff and professionals promotes the smooth running of contact for children and young people with their family and friends. Family members, who hold parental responsibility, report that staff keep them updated and seek appropriate permission when needed.

An assessment undertaken by the multi-disciplinary team has resulted in staff receiving training to make improvements in communication techniques. Staff are addressing the identified shortfalls such as a lack of visual aids and the need for more child-friendly forms envisaging that this will ensure consistency across the school and care environment. The expectation is that children and young people will benefit from an improvement in tools to obtain their views about the running of the home. Any increase of visual aids will also assist young people's development of independence skills.

Children and young people are encouraged to feed back about service provision. They also have access to an advocate who visits regularly to help them challenge the local authority. Young people are empowered to make decisions about their future. However, staff's insistence for children and young people to sign numerous home's forms and documentation when they are not child-friendly is an uncalled reminder to them that their lives are different to those of their peers who live within a family setting.

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| | Judgement grade |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | Good |
| <p>Children and young people receive consistent levels of supervision and structure that keep them safe. Some young people benefit from an increased level of responsibility by being allowed unsupervised time at home and in the community. These risk assessed opportunities help to meet young people's developmental needs for increased independence, helping to reduce their risk-taking behaviour. This helps to build trusting relationships between staff, increasing young people's willingness to follow advice to access services to reduce substance misuse. This sensitive persistence by staff promotes increased understanding by young people</p> | |

about how the choices that they make affect their well-being. A senior member of staff said, 'We are all working together to look at how we can help the young person further understand the risks.'

Staff understand the reasons why young people leave the home without permission and why they are occasionally missing. Established relationships with social workers and police result in agreed risk reduction plans that improve young people's safety. There are no concerns that children or young people are at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Children and young people live in a safe setting. Plans for a major upgrade to the three homes accommodating children and young people on the site of this large provision are well underway. Staff sensitively manage the resulting changes of accommodation for children and young people. This ensures the least amount of disruption. Children and young people benefit greatly from now living in small groups or in domestic-style flats and houses. This newly refurbished accommodation is comfortable and homely, with personalised bedrooms that reflect children's and young people's own interests. Some of the external areas between the homes are not well lit. While there had not been any concerns, lack of sufficient lighting is potentially hazardous.

The management takes immediate and thorough action in response to any concerns about the conduct of staff. The management seeks advice and guidance from the designated officer for the local authority. This means timely outcomes and quick resolutions to any concerns.

Staff are not always clear about any changes that are made to children's assessments and plans. This leads to inconsistent care practice. For example, staff intervened and physically restrained a young person on two separate occasions in spite of the plan stating that this practice was not appropriate. A member of staff said, 'Everyone should read the risk assessments but I don't know whether they do.'

Staff sometimes restrain children and young people to keep them and others safe and sanctions are also used in response to children's and young people's behaviour. Gaps in the recording of these incidents hinder effective evaluation and review of any approaches.

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| | Judgement grade |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers | Good |
| <p>The manager is very experienced and has been in post prior to the re-registration of the home with this provider in December 2015. In addition to being a qualified social worker, she has recently completed the necessary level 5 management qualification. She demonstrates a genuine commitment to achieving good outcomes for children and young people whose needs are clearly central to the running of the home. When talking about what the home's strengths are, the manager said, 'Our staff and the relationships that we make with young people.'</p> <p>Staff receive effective, regular supervision and new staff undergo a comprehensive induction. This follows on from a careful vetting procedure to ensure their suitability to work at the home. Staff feel valued and well supported, enabling them to sustain meaningful relationships with children and young people. A member of staff said, 'Staff really care, there is a nice feel to the homes, you can see it in how the staff are with children and young people and you can feel it.'</p> <p>Leaders and managers demonstrate a sound understanding of the areas for development. This includes how to improve and build on good practice. For example, reviewing pre-admission assessment procedures resulting in a more rigorous approach. Additionally, managers thoroughly monitor and review the progress that children and young people make. New targets are set to encourage continued progress, with staff committed to obtain the best outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Staff have completed additional training as required by the home's new registered provider. This means that they have a refreshed knowledge in safeguarding and autism, and further understanding about the prevention of radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. This helps staff to keep children's and young people's needs at the forefront of their care practice. A member of staff said, 'There was a whole new package of training that we all had to complete.'</p> <p>While the manager has raised issues at a senior level with a placing authority about poor transition planning, there are other examples when concerns have not been brought to the attention of the director of children's services following a poor response from social workers. For example, lack of pathway plans, when placing authorities do not identify alternative provision and when there is a dispute about safeguarding responsibilities. A senior member of staff said, 'We didn't go above the team manager. I had to contact the placing authority repeatedly to try and find out what was happening.'</p> | |

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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