

Cambian Hereford School

Coningsby Road, Leominster HR6 8LL

Inspection dates

13–15 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- As a result of the headteacher's exemplary leadership and the support of a committed team of staff and governors, pupils receive an outstanding and bespoke education at Cambian Hereford School. All independent school standards are met.
- The shared view of staff and pupils of 'being like one big family' is reflected in the nurturing and caring relationships evident in the school.
- Teachers plan interesting and engaging learning activities, helping pupils make accelerated progress.
- Pupils are very well supported by staff in learning to manage their behaviour. Staff are determined not to give up on these pupils, who have previously experienced a difficult or disruptive education.
- From very low starting points, pupils' attendance is much improved. As a result, pupils are now engaging in their education with a purpose.
- Pupils take part in a rich variety of experiences which develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of the world. They are proud of their charity work.
- Pupils' welfare is at the heart of all staff's practice. Pupils are kept safe and are supported well to learn how to manage their personal safety.
- The headteacher is relentless in her pursuit of different learning experiences to re-engage pupils in their learning. The use of alternative provision is carefully planned and matched closely to individual pupils' needs and interests.
- Leaders track pupils' progress closely, not just in terms of academic outcomes but in all aspects of personal and social development. As a result, any additional support that pupils need is identified quickly and well targeted.
- Pupils are helped to get back on track with their learning and gain a range of external accreditations. Consequently, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Middle leaders are not yet able to check standards of pupils' work with other schools in the local area, as relationships are in early stages of development.
- Leaders are refining their assessment systems for tracking progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve leadership at all levels by:
 - embedding the newly-developed assessment system for tracking progress in curriculum subjects other than English, mathematics and science
 - building on recently established links with other schools to increase opportunities for staff to externally moderate pupils' work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher's relentless drive to make sure that pupils receive the very best support they deserve permeates throughout the school. As a result, there is a palpable, shared sense of determination to make sure that every pupil will be successful, despite their barriers to learning and previous experiences in education.
- All staff are proud to work at the school. They know the pupils extremely well, and develop strong and supportive working relationships with them. Staff recognise that pupils have experienced difficulties in their lives, and as a result know that small steps of improvement can be big achievements for pupils. The comment that 'There is something, somewhere, to celebrate every day' is a perfect example of the positive approach that staff bring to their work.
- The proprietor and senior directors have not compromised on staff appointments. They believe that investment in well-qualified and trained staff will have the best impact on pupils' outcomes and life chances.
- Governors and leaders are extremely reflective of their practice. The rigorous monitoring systems in place enable leaders and governors to review improvements made to the school and refine them where necessary. Leaders routinely check their compliance with the independent school standards, and as a result, they are fully met.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website, and provides clear and up-to-date information, based on guidance in the DfE's 'Keeping children safe in education', 2016. There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school, evident in staff's day-to-day practice. All staff have a clear understanding of the actions they should take if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum, based on the national curriculum, provides a breadth of experiences relevant to the pupils' interests and needs. Leaders review the curriculum annually, and are not afraid to make adaptations if it means that more pupils will become better engaged in learning. If a pupil shows an interest in a subject, the headteacher will do everything possible to ensure that the pupil has an opportunity to pursue this interest. From horse riding to psychology, there are very few limits to learning, as well as opportunities to gain a wide range of external accreditations beyond GCSEs.
- Pupils take part in frequent business and enterprise activities at the school, which link to their vocational courses. A group of pupils were regional finalists in a recent national enterprise challenge. Some pupils are currently promoting the sale of their handmade noticeboards. Pupils studying GCSE and BTEC qualifications in art and design have exhibited their high-quality artwork in nearby Hereford.
- The curriculum is further enriched by wide-ranging and engaging activities which support all aspects of pupils' learning and personal development. Leaders maximise the use of the limited space in the building, but this has provided a particular challenge in delivering quality physical education. As a result, leaders have created wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to take part every week in a variety of physical education (PE) activities in the local community. Pupils enjoy attending the local gym, boxing club and other pursuits, such as rock climbing and canoeing.

- Alternative provision is used to excellent effect for pupils. The headteacher is realistic in understanding that the constraints of the school building and the resources available mean that pupils' needs can only be further enhanced by using high-quality alternative provision. Following a rigorous quality assurance process, pupils are provided with a bespoke timetable which may include pursuing alternative courses, or enhanced support for their personal development at an alternative provider. The headteacher's uncompromising focus on high standards ensures that alternative providers are of the best quality, resulting in a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Providers enable pupils to re-engage in learning and achieve accredited outcomes, or develop their social, independence skills and wider resilience.
- Parents said that there have been significant improvements in the school since the headteacher took up her post in 2016. They value the regular communication, and say that pupils are highly supported to achieve success. Parents say that they feel listened to.
- Leaders have high expectations of teachers and they monitor all aspects of their work rigorously to ensure that good standards are being achieved. Leaders are not afraid to challenge poor performance, or provide support where it is needed. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is strong.
- Staff's calm and consistent approach to the management of behaviour ensures that pupils receive the support they need in school. Daily information-sharing between home and school highlights any concerns or difficulties that the pupils may be facing. As a result, staff are able to provide timely pastoral support for pupils. Pupils are becoming more resilient in lessons, because they have been equipped with strategies to manage their own behaviour better. Given the limited space in the building, pupils manage transition and breaktimes extremely well.
- The introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has enabled pupils to develop their understanding of the local and wider communities further. Pupils enjoy regular volunteering activities, and regularly fundraise for local and national charities. Pupils talked to the inspector about how they sponsor a young boy in East Pakistan. Having achieved the bronze award, some pupils are now beginning to work towards the silver award.
- Leaders have reviewed and refined their assessment systems to make sure that they are fit for purpose. The tracking of English, mathematics and science is now well established. However, the tracking of other subjects in the new system is not as well developed.
- The work of middle leaders complements the school's wider improvement plan. Subject leaders regularly moderate examples of pupils' work in school, and examination work is externally moderated. However, staff have only just begun working with other schools to cross-check and validate their judgements about pupils' work.

Governance

- Governance of the school is very effective. Cambian Group ensures that leaders are both supported and challenged in equal measure. Policies are reviewed regularly and shared with staff. There is a healthy balance of corporate accountability, but an understanding of the unique setting of the school.
- Governors' systematic and effective monitoring of the school drives further improvements. The regional education leader has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths

and ongoing improvements. He visits the school on a half-termly basis for focused and support visits, assessing progress and compliance with the school standards. He checks that leaders are on track to achieve the planned improvements and identifies good practice.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff receive regular training and updates about safeguarding. Staff are aware of the potential risks to which pupils may be exposed, and training is tailored to respond to local issues, such as child sexual exploitation. Staff appreciated the training they received from the local authority's designated safeguarding officer to help them improve their practice. As a result, staff are extremely vigilant to safeguarding risks, and liaise frequently with parents and carers to identify any early concerns.
- Leaders ensure a rigorous approach to risk assessments. Each pupil has a personalised risk assessment, and these are immediately reviewed following an incident. Alternative providers are checked thoroughly prior to pupils beginning their placements. Premises are visited, health and safety checks are carried out and staff's suitability to work with pupils are all assessed. Staff continuously assess risks, which are sometimes dependent on pupils' moods, putting in additional support to make sure a pupil is ready for learning.
- In their pursuit of excellence, governors have thoughtfully adopted a best-practice approach, by reviewing any significant safeguarding incidents to see if any lessons can be learned and practice can be further enhanced.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils are likely to join the school having had negative experiences of education, or poor attendance. In order to gather an accurate picture of pupils' needs, teachers carry out comprehensive baseline assessments to identify any gaps in their learning. Leaders and teachers then track pupils' progress on a half-termly basis to make sure that they are on track to achieve their targets.
- Despite pupils' previous experiences, staff establish high expectations for learning, ensuring that pupils make accelerated progress in their learning in order to achieve good outcomes. The high-quality teaching helps pupils to make rapid progress and work towards achieving qualifications in a range of subjects.
- Teaching is well planned and ensures that work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers make sure that pupils are clear about what they are learning, and what they should know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. Additional support for pupils, such as the use of coloured paper or visual diagrams and prompts, enable pupils to access learning successfully.
- Staff's use of questioning is very effective. Teachers not only use questioning to check pupils' understanding, but to also deepen their learning about a subject. The inspector saw examples of effective questioning, developing mathematical understanding through a food technology lesson. As pupils chopped a courgette into two halves, they were asked to express a half as a decimal, or a fraction.

- The strong relationships that exist between staff and pupils have created a culture of trust within lessons. Pupils are not afraid to ask for help, or to talk about how they have improved their work over time. Teachers manage risks well in lessons and pupils understand the importance of safe practices in science and food technology. Pupils carried knives sensibly, and followed safety precautions when using the Bunsen burners in a crystallisation experiment, for example.
- In a sex and relationships education (SRE) lesson, pupils were confident to talk openly with staff about their understanding of sexually transmitted infections. Relationships between staff and pupils were excellent, and the trust that existed enabled pupils to deepen their understanding of this sensitive topic in a safe environment.
- Pupils have a good understanding of their targets, and use the progress grids in their books to check that they are on track. They are able to talk confidently about how their work has improved over time, and work in books shows the progress they are making. Pupils' work is generally well presented. Standards of work in art and food technology are particularly high.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' previous experiences in education mean that they may arrive at school with gaps in their learning and little trust of adults. Staff quickly get to know pupils very well and develop strong, nurturing relationships. There is a strong emphasis on meeting pupils' social and emotional needs, as staff know that pupils will not be ready to learn unless they feel safe and secure. Pupils agreed with the comment that, 'This is the first school where they really understand us.'
- Pupils recognise that they are helped to learn how to manage their own personal safety. Pupils are confident about how to keep safe online. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about the recent 'SELFIE' (sexualisation, exploitation, love, friendships, information and empowerment) project in which they had participated. As a result of this project, pupils had a better understanding of the meaning of consent, and how grooming develops.
- Records show that bullying is rare in the school. Pupils agreed with this. They described having fall-outs with their friends from time to time, but they are supported to resolve matters. The very small numbers of racist incidents that are recorded are dealt with swiftly through additional pastoral support and through equality and diversity work, which forms part of the pupils' personal, social, health and economic education curriculum.
- Healthy lifestyles are promoted through PE activities and other subject areas. In food technology, for example, pupils learn to cook low-fat versions of meals, and think about how meals can be adapted for different tastes. Pupils suggested substituting tofu for mince, while preparing and cooking a lasagne.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils move around the building sensibly, and show respect to visitors. On some occasions, pupils need additional help to manage their behaviour, but this is done in a discreet and considerate way. In lessons, pupils listen respectfully to the views of others.
- Staff update behaviour plans regularly, so that they can identify the support that pupils may need to manage their behaviour. Leaders make sure that staff and pupils are familiar with these, and that pupils can use strategies to ask for help if they need it.
- Behaviour in alternative provisions is strong, because leaders make sure that the providers have been given the necessary information about pupils' needs. Leaders and providers agree on procedures to follow, should they have any concerns about pupils' welfare or behaviour.
- While staff are appropriately trained in the use of physical interventions, records show that there is very little use of them. Both staff and pupils confirmed that this was the case. On the rare occasion that physical interventions are used, their use is recorded in detail. Pupils and staff are provided with additional support after an incident, as well as an opportunity to reflect on what happened and how it could be avoided next time.
- Behaviour incidents are monitored and recorded rigorously. Leaders analyse records weekly to identify any patterns which may be emerging, so that additional support can be put in place for pupils and practice can be refined.
- From their very low starting points, pupils make huge progress in their attendance. Prior to attending Cambian Hereford, some pupils have been out of school for up to two years. For the very small number of pupils who are not attending regularly, additional support and monitoring is in place to ensure that pupils are safe and have work they can complete at home. Temporary part-time timetables are used as a last resort, and only for short periods of time. Leaders make sure that reintegration plans identify prompt support to enable pupils to attend on a full-time basis.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Most pupils join Cambian Hereford School part-way through their secondary education. Some do not join until they are in Year 10 or Year 11. However, leaders have high aspirations for pupils regardless of their joining date and do not use pupils' past experiences in education as an excuse for poor outcomes. Leaders know that pupils will have a better chance in life if they are able to gain accredited outcomes.
- Pupils follow a variety of courses in key stages 3 and 4, and are able to leave school with GCSEs, BTECs, functional skills qualifications and vocational qualifications. Some pupils achieve GCSE outcomes at higher grades. Pupils receive quality independent careers information, advice and guidance to help them identify the most appropriate next step after leaving school. Year on year, pupils move on successfully to further education, training and employment opportunities, usually at a higher level of qualification. School records show that pupils remain in these courses over time.

- The school's current progress information shows that the majority of pupils are making strong progress and are on track to achieve their end-of-year targets in English, mathematics and science. While leaders are not yet able to measure the progress in other subjects in the same detail, pupils' coursework in food technology and art also shows similar strong progress.
- Leaders recognise the importance of progress in its wider sense rather than just academic progress. Leaders are able to track, on a daily basis, pupils' achievements in behaviour, engagement in learning and lesson outcomes and put in additional support when necessary.
- Leaders make sure that pupils are well prepared for the challenge of taking examinations. Pupils have the opportunity to experience examination conditions to help them understand what is expected of them before they finish their courses. Pupils are assessed appropriately to see if they are eligible for additional support in examinations, in line with national regulations.

School details

Unique reference number	117048
DfE registration number	884/6010
Inspection number	10006074

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Group
Chair	Anne Marie Carrie
Headteacher	Farah Quinn
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,500
Telephone number	01568 620443
Website	www.cambiangroup.com
Email address	farah.quinn@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	22–23 November 2012

Information about this school

- Cambian Hereford School is a smaller than average independent school which caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. The majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan. The vast majority of pupils have been placed by their local authority. Approximately 10 different local authorities place pupils at the school.
- The school is registered for up to 20 pupils, aged 11 to 19 years. There is currently no on-site provision for 16 to 19 learners, and the school has no pupils on roll over the age of 16.

- The school transferred its ownership and management from Advance Education Trust to the Cambian Group in 2014. At the time of the previous inspection in 2012, the school was known as 'The Larches'.
- The current headteacher joined the school in April 2016.
- The school uses a number of alternative providers, including Red Castle Training Ltd, The SMILE project, Top Barn, University of Worcester, Wildgoose Rural Training, Worcester Guitar Centre and The Bluestone Centre.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed lessons in English, mathematics, science, art, SRE and food technology, as well as visiting tutorial time. She was accompanied by the headteacher for some of these observations.
- The lead inspector made visits to two alternative providers during the inspection: Red Castle Training Ltd and The SMILE project.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils, and spoke to pupils informally during the inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, the assistant headteacher, the regional education lead for Cambian Group and the director of education for Cambian Group, who was representing the proprietor.
- The inspector also met with the subject leaders for English and mathematics, and a representative group of staff.
- Thirteen responses to the staff questionnaire were analysed.
- The inspector met with a small group of parents and took in to account the very small number of free-text responses on Ofsted's Parent View survey.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of information and documents from the school, including the school's website, self-evaluation and development plan, curriculum information and schemes of work, and progress and attainment information.
- The inspector scrutinised safeguarding information about the school, including the school's single central record relating to recruitment checks, safeguarding concerns and individual pupil records.

Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 children looked after, 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

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 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018