

Cambian Hartlepool School

Unit E, Sovereign Way, Sovereign Park, Hartlepool TS25 1NN

Inspection dates

6–8 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Governors have sustained the performance of the school since its last inspection. They have ensured all the independent school standards have been met.
- Governors know their school well and have ambitious plans for its continuing improvement and future development.
- School leaders ensure that pupils have a curriculum that meets their current needs, provides access to recognised qualifications and supports pupils' progression to further education, training and employment.
- School leaders have not fully embedded a framework for whole-school assessment and do not always ensure that information on pupils' previous learning is available to teachers. For a small number of pupils this leads to a delay in teachers being able to plan effectively for their future learning when these pupils first join the school.
- Teachers' knowledge of their subject areas is strong. Teachers provide well-structured and engaging lessons which enable pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils' writing skills are not being developed consistently across all subject areas and not all teachers know how to improve writing skills for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.
- Pupils behave well. They are proud of their school and speak highly of the support that they receive from their teachers.
- Pupils appreciate the extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school, which have improved their social skills and broadened their knowledge of their local community.
- Pupils have good relationships with staff and this supports their personal development and well-being.
- School leaders use a range of strategies to improve pupils' attendance. However, a small number of pupils do not attend school as often as they should and this is affecting the progress they make at school.
- School leaders ensure that pupils are safe in school and in the wider community.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers have access to effective assessment information and are able to use this to plan for the future learning of individual pupils, particularly those who have SEN and disabilities
 - teachers are equipped to develop pupils' writing skills in all areas of the curriculum, including the vocational programmes.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - improving attendance, especially for the small number of pupils whose attendance does not improve once they are settled in the school, through evaluating the different approaches currently being used to improve pupils' attendance so as to inform future strategies.

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Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders have ensured that the school meets all paragraphs in all parts of the independent school standards.
- The headteacher sets high expectations for his staff team and the positive relationships that are evident between teachers, parents and carers and pupils are testament to the thoughtful manner in which he models considerate behaviour and care for the well-being of pupils.
- The headteacher has ensured that the curriculum offered is compliant with the requirements of the independent school standards and is mindful of preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. The curriculum meets the specific needs of the school's cohort as it balances preparation for academic GCSE programmes with vocational qualifications in construction, catering and art and design. Pupils speak highly of the range of subjects available to them and report that the opportunity to try vocational programmes has helped them with choices for further education and future careers.
- School leaders keep the curriculum under close scrutiny to ensure that it matches pupils' interests and aspirations. The headteacher is proactive in seeking out partnerships with other schools locally to maintain a broad qualifications offer despite small pupil numbers in some subject areas.
- School leaders have not fully embedded a framework of assessment. For example, the school has an assessment policy that refers to specialist assessments being completed when pupils enter the school. However, the headteacher has not ensured that these are being carried out consistently. This means that teachers do not always have the breadth of information they need to inform their planning for individual pupils' future learning, especially for those pupils who have SEN and disabilities. The headteacher does ensure, however, that teachers produce ongoing assessment information and that they use this to discuss with individual pupils the progress they are making.

Governance

- Governors have a wide range of skills and experience covering school leadership, human resources, finance and premises. As a result, they are able to provide effective support and challenge to the headteacher which is contributing to the school's improvement.
- School leaders know their school well and have identified plans for continued improvement. Governors have introduced a system of self-evaluation that has enabled the headteacher to produce an effective school development plan. The board of governors meets with the headteacher half-termly to monitor all aspects of the school's progress against an agenda that is published for staff and parents. In addition to these half-termly meetings, the headteacher reports identified performance indicators to the proprietor group's regional director on a weekly basis.
- Governors have embedded a performance management system that now includes an effective training schedule for all staff. This training has been appreciated by staff, who now have access to nationally recognised professional qualifications in teaching, learning

and education management.

- The governors have invested in the school's learning environments and teaching resources. The effect of this investment can be seen in the breadth of curriculum being offered to pupils and the use of specialist subject teachers and vocational tutors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements comply with current government requirements and meet paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b) of the independent school standards.
- School leaders have published their safeguarding policy on the school website and the policy meets paragraphs 32(1) and 32(1)(c) of the independent school standards.
- School leaders are swift to take appropriate action if they feel that a pupil is at risk and they know how to work with multi-agency teams to keep pupils safe.
- School leaders ensure that there is comprehensive safeguarding training for all staff and monitor this closely. All staff spoken to during the course of the inspection were very clear in their understanding of policies and guidance with regard to safeguarding of children.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and feel well supported by staff. The caring ethos of the school and the positive relationships between staff and pupils contributes to the sense of safety and care that pupils and parents commented on during the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to teach interesting, well-structured lessons which keep pupils engaged in their learning.
- Teachers have well-established routines at the start of each lesson and this contributes to positive attitudes for learning from pupils.
- During lessons teachers provide verbal feedback frequently and this helps pupils to stay on task and to understand the importance of each part of the lesson.
- Verbal and written feedback to pupils, in line with the school's stated policy, is consistent across all subjects and phases and is contributing well to pupil progress.
- Teachers of English and mathematics pay close attention to plugging gaps in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, pupils' literacy skills are not been developed equally in all subjects and there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills further in the vocational curriculum.
- The curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of its pupils well. There is a focus on English and mathematics and also a broad vocational qualification offer which contributes to the pupils' preparation for further training and employment.
- Teachers use discussion tasks and questioning throughout their lessons to help pupils work through ideas and to improve their understanding of subject-specific vocabulary.
- Teachers work across subject areas to provide practical learning opportunities which develop a broad range of skills in pupils. One example, the refurbishment of the art room,

meant that pupils had to learn how to work as a team to create the design, purchase the materials and then construct the room itself.

- Teachers have designed learning environments that foster pupil engagement, and displays are used effectively to reinforce knowledge.
- Parents say that they are kept well informed about how their son or daughter is progressing in the school and what they need to do to improve further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders have ensured that there is a planned, rich and varied approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in the formal curriculum. Pupils also speak warmly of the range of trips they go on with staff and the topic days that they experience, for example on Safer Internet Day and through Anti-Bullying Week.
- Teachers work with pupils on charity fundraising projects and this has helped to develop pupils' citizenship skills, as well as pupils' knowledge about themselves and their local community.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and this helps to build pupils' self-esteem and emotional resilience. The staff work hard as a team to provide an enjoyable variety of extra-curricular activities to help pupils learn about the wider community in which they live and to develop effective social skills.
- The headteacher has ensured that there is impartial careers advice available to pupils and staff provide extensive support to pupils to ensure that they are confident about further education and training. This support includes regular visits to local colleges, accompanying pupils to interviews and providing ongoing transition support in the first term after pupils have left the school.
- The high-quality displays around the school reinforce messages about fundamental British values and celebrate pupils' achievements.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupil behaviour observed during the inspection was polite and friendly and there was no disruption to learning.
- Staff implement well-established routines at the start of each day, in lessons and at social times and, as a result, pupils are clear as to what is expected of them.
- Pupils are quick to take direction from staff and say that they are confident with the way that any problems that arise in school are dealt with.
 - The majority of pupils attend well. Many pupils have been at several different schools prior to their start at Cambian Hartlepool. The duration of their stay and their improved attendance during their time at Cambian Hartlepool contributes significantly to their personal development and welfare. However, poor attendance is still a feature of the behaviour of a small number of some pupils and below what is expected nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- While pupils' attainment is low when compared to their peers nationally, pupils do make rapid progress from their individual starting points on joining the school. This can be seen in lessons and in pupils' workbooks across all subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils gain recognised qualifications at the end of key stage 4 that ensure that they can progress to the next stage of education and training.
- Destinations data shows that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future employment. Current data shows that the majority of pupils progress to further education colleges and embark on training programmes linked to employment aspirations. The headteacher continues to track pupil destinations over the year after pupils have left the school and this information shows that transition support provided by the school is effective, as the majority of pupils have continued in their college placement.
- Whole-school attendance data shows that attendance has improved consistently for the past three years. Pupils often arrive at the school having had a disrupted education with poor attendance. The majority of pupils show a rapid improvement in their engagement and get close to the national average for attendance once they have settled at Cambian Hartlepool. However, a small number of pupils have attendance that is still too low and this affects their progress in examination subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	135424
DfE registration number	805/6002
Inspection number	10043656

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	10 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	c/o Cambian Education
Chair	Anne Marie Carrie
Headteacher	Paul Barnfather
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,500
Telephone number	01429 224965
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/childrensservices/specialisteducationservices/esddayschools.aspx
Email address	paul.barnfather@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	20–22 January 2015

Information about this school

- This is a special school for pupils aged 10 to 18 with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are also now on roll.
- The majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan but this is not a requirement to be admitted to the school.
- The school has capacity for 18 pupils with 14 pupils on roll at present.
- The school has a staff team of eight (headteacher, three teachers, three vocational tutors and one teaching assistant).

- The school was last inspected on 20 January 2015. There has been no change of headteacher since that inspection but the chair of the governing body is new.
- The proprietor group provides the function of governance in the form of the governance council which meets with the headteacher every six weeks.
- The school has no specific specialism or religious affiliation.
- The school is based on one site and does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- One inspector was allocated to this inspection and covered the following inspection activities:
 - a tour of the school with short visits to all classrooms and social areas
 - six lesson observations
 - scrutiny of pupils' work covering all subjects
 - school documentation checks
 - meetings with staff, headteacher and governors
 - contact with parents and social workers through face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and an analysis of parents' responses from Parent View
 - meetings with pupils
 - a check of the premises against the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Patricia Head, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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