

Inspection of Cambian Northampton School

67a Queens Park Parade, Kingsthorpe, Northampton NN2 6LR

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for Cambian Northampton. They are welcoming, inquisitive and respectful. Pupils and staff live out the school's 'BRAVE' values (Behaviour, Resilience, Activity, Vocation and Education). Staff are passionate and ambitious for all pupils to succeed.

Most pupils meet the school's high expectations of behaviour. They learn to manage their emotions and behaviour during their time at school. They are sensitively supported to rebuild relationships when they are occasionally unkind to each other. Pupils' attendance improves over time. Most want to be at school. Their attendance is much better than in their previous schools. Pupils feel safe. They know that staff listen to their worries.

Pupils experience enriching opportunities that stimulate and nurture their interests and talents. Pupils gain confidence, resilience and independence. They fondly recall visiting museums and galleries, flying to Edinburgh, camping in Wales and taking part in charity events. Opportunities for pupils' personal development are exceptional. Pupils flourish.

The school expects pupils to work hard. Pupils engage very well. They make significant gains in their learning. They take pride in their work, successes and in the school. Pupils comment very positively on the support they receive. A pupil spoke for many, saying, 'Staff help us through our struggles and get us to be grown up.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders lead with a determined and robust moral purpose. They put pupils' interests first. Staff share a common goal. They are ambitious and aspirational for pupils to be valued and successful. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate different training opportunities. They strive to continually build and improve the school's provision. Staff recognise much improvement in recent years.

The school has developed a curriculum that is ambitious in its scope and breadth. Pupils experience a range of subjects that include academic, creative and vocational learning. Pupils learn well. They gain relevant qualifications. They are very well prepared for their next steps.

The curriculum is focused to meet the specific additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has developed coherent subject overviews that precisely identify the key knowledge that pupils need to learn and when. For example, in mathematics, pupils build their knowledge of shape, area and volume. Subject curriculums clearly identify the pupils' steps in learning. For example, in art, each year pupils build their knowledge and skills of different techniques using a range of media. However, not all subject curriculums clearly identify how pupils build subject-specific skills over time. For example, in science,

leaders are in the process of identifying the learning pupils need to be able to think and work well scientifically.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils learn to read well. Staff focus on key vocabulary. Pupils who need extra support with their reading fluency and comprehension receive effective assistance. Pupils gain confidence in reading.

The school uses a range of approaches to identify pupils' additional needs. Staff use this information to help overcome the barriers pupils have to their learning. Staff know pupils exceptionally well. They know the gaps that pupils have in their learning. They skilfully help pupils deal with, and at times overcome, social, emotional and mental health needs. As a result, pupils become more resilient and are able to tackle suitably demanding work. The school is rightly proud of pupils' many achievements.

Staff teach well. They thoughtfully plan purposeful lessons. Teaching focuses on the precise knowledge and builds learning in small steps. Staff check pupils' learning. Teachers adapt what they are teaching so that pupils successfully revisit and embed learning. For example, staff break tasks down, provide appropriate resources and ask questions to deepen pupils' learning.

The provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is very well planned and delivered. It excellently supports pupils' personal development. Pupils receive age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE). The school expertly fosters pupils' character development. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have opportunities to learn about respect, difference and equality. They understand a range of faiths and religions. They appreciate cultural diversity. They deepen their understanding of right and wrong, and the place of law in society. They learn about potential risks. For example, they learn about knife crime, water safety and how to make safe choices when online. Pupils are actively involved in the community. They make a difference to the lives of others, for example through charitable work for homeless people. The school successfully nurtures pupils' empathy and generosity.

Pupils have access to high-quality careers advice and guidance. They are guided in exploring their interests and options when thinking about their futures. Pupils have many opportunities to experience the world of work. They are able to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Leaders, including the proprietor, have a strong appreciation of the independent school standards (the standards). The school meets all the standards securely and consistently. Leaders comply with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The premises are well maintained. Appropriate pre-employment checks are completed before adults start working with pupils. Risk assessments are appropriate. Key information is readily available on the school's website, including the school's RSE, complaints and safeguarding policies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have developed suitably ambitious curriculums in many subjects. However, in some subjects, the school has not fully determined the precise disciplinary knowledge pupils need to learn and when. The school should make sure that all subject curriculums are equally ambitious, including in relation to pupils' development of subject-specific skills, to enable pupils to know, remember and do more over time across the full breadth of the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	131802
DfE registration number	941/6067
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10299183
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Group Limited
Chair	Farouq Sheikh
Headteacher	Leanne Dodds
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,415
Telephone number	01604 719711
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-northampton-school
Email address	education@cambiangroup.com
Dates of previous inspection	22 to 24 October 2019

Information about this school

- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 24 pupils aged 11 to 18. The school does not admit pupils aged over 16 years. There are no students in the sixth form. There are 24 pupils currently on roll.
- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2020.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in October 2019, when it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. They met with a range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with a director remotely. He met with a company officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, art and personal development. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited sample lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors visited lessons in other subjects, including religious education, history, RSE, community, digital learning and careers.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; reviewed safeguarding records; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about various aspects of school life.

- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. They looked at the school’s website and published information about the school’s provision, including policies related to health and safety, curriculum, teaching and complaints. They reviewed the school’s self-evaluation and development plan.
- The lead inspector toured the premises to review the suitability of the accommodation.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers, including those who submitted comments on Ofsted Parent View. They reviewed responses to Ofsted’s survey of school staff.

Inspection team

Chris Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Mark Anderson

His Majesty’s Inspector

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