

Cambian Great Dunmow School

Unit 13, Flitch Industrial Estate, Chelmsford Road, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1XJ

Inspection date

13 March 2025

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 3 to 3(b)

- At the time of the progress monitoring inspection in October 2024, these independent school standards (the standards) were not met. Much of the curriculum was new. The impact on pupils was not what the school intended. The school had begun to put in place a new phonics provision. However, the support for early readers was not embedded.
- There is now a well-considered reading curriculum in place. Staff have been comprehensively trained to deliver it. The school carefully checks where pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge. Effective phonics teaching means that early readers develop their reading fluency. They read texts that they understand and enjoy. The school is building a positive culture of reading. Pupils have rapidly developed their assurance as readers. For example, they read aloud clearly and confidently with staff present. Staff skilfully enhance pupils' vocabulary. The reading curriculum builds cohesively into support for pupils' writing.
- In other areas, the curriculum is now consistently and successfully delivered. For example, teachers explain and model new content clearly. Pupils apply what they learn well, such as in English using conjunctions accurately in sentences. Teachers check closely for misconceptions and address them. They demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge. Teaching adeptly matches learning to pupils' interests in order to support engagement. For example, in information technology, pupils confidently learn, not only facts about online safety, but a rich awareness of risks from how internet companies operate. In some areas, pupils do not develop the detailed knowledge they might. However, they are now doing well.
- Where pupils learn off site, the school does all it can to meet their needs. Pupils receive consistent welfare support. The school liaises regularly with agencies, where appropriate. Staff ensure that learning builds carefully on pupils' prior knowledge. These pupils build up what they know over time.

Paragraphs 3(d), 3(h)

- At the previous monitoring inspection, the school had improved how well it trained staff to identify and support pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. While this was the case, it was having mixed success. Staff sometimes did not meet pupils' needs effectively in lessons. Pupils at times lost focus and disengaged. This hampered their learning. Therefore, these standards were not met.
- The school has established thorough processes to ensure pupils' SEMH needs are routinely reviewed and supported. It equips staff with the information that they need to know how best to help pupils. Pupils are more settled because their needs are better identified and met. Pupils who struggled to engage, now learn productively for extended periods of time. They show more resilience and pride in their work.
- The standards in this part are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 32(1), and 32(1)(c)

- The school has maintained a vigilant culture of safeguarding. Staff know how to spot and log concerns. This includes when they have questions about the conduct of a colleague. The school ensures that the right actions are taken to keep pupils safe. Pupils have very positive relationships with staff. Pupils feel and are safe at the school. They are confident to disclose any worries they have.
- There is a suitable safeguarding policy on the school's website.
- These standards were met at the previous inspection and remain met.

Paragraph 9, 9(b)

- At the previous monitoring inspection, this standard was not met. This was because the school's expectations were not embedded. Behaviour was sometimes unsettled.
- The school has reset and improved the behaviour culture. This has led to better experiences for pupils. The number of incidents has markedly fallen. For example, the school has not needed to physically support pupils with their behaviour since Ofsted's previous visit. Staff manage any low-level issues, such as inappropriate language or off-task chatter, in a supportive way. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of them. They find rewards motivational. Behaviour is now calm and purposeful.
- Clear routines help pupils buy into the school's culture. Pupils mingle well at breaktimes. They develop their social skills in a safe and affirming environment.
- The orderly learning environment has enhanced staff well-being. Staff remember, and successfully apply, the training that they receive. For example, they understand not to overreact to surface behaviours when what is required is to support the underlying need.
- The standards in this part are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(b)

- At the previous monitoring inspection, the proprietor had not ensured that the standards were consistently met. While improvements had been made, several of these were not sufficiently established.
- The proprietor provides routine and rigorous oversight of the quality of provision. It supports and challenges the school effectively. The proprietor is realistic about the provision's strengths and areas to develop. For example, it knows that there is more to do to ensure that the curriculum creates deep and connected knowledge. However, the proprietor has ensured that the school meets pupils' needs well, so that they are able to access their learning.
- The school's leadership has shown determination and expertise in creating a steep upward curve of improvement over the past year. There is now a programme of regular and well-considered professional development for staff. Staff are proud to work at the school. They praise what they see as a transformation of the ethos. Staff appreciate the support from leaders with their well-being.
- Essex local authority has regular and recent knowledge of the school and also evaluates it to have made rapid improvement.
- The standards in this part are now met.

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 that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively;

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently;

School details

Unique reference number	149357
DfE registration number	881/6091
Inspection number	10382468

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 status	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Childcare Limited
Chair	Farouq Rashid Sheikh
Headteacher	Carrie-Ann Gibbs
Annual fees (day pupils)	£59,000 to £89,000
Telephone number	01371705623
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-great-dunmow-school/
Email address	Carrie-ann.gibbs@cambiangroup.com
Dates of previous standard inspection	3 October 2023 to 18 April 2024

Information about this school

- The proprietor body is Cambian Childcare Limited, which is part of the Caretech group of companies. The Caretech group provides a range of services for children nationally, including other registered schools.
- The school was first registered on 11 October 2022.
- There was a standard inspection of the school in April 2024. The school was evaluated to require improvement. The standards were not met.

- After the standard inspection the DfE asked the school to submit an action plan. This was evaluated by Ofsted on July 22, 2024. It was deemed acceptable, if modifications were made. There was a progress monitoring inspection on 8 October 2024. At this, the school was evaluated not to meet the standards. The DfE asked the school to submit a new action plan. This was evaluated by Ofsted and deemed acceptable on 3 January 2025.
- The school provides education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Their primary need is SEMH. Places at the school are mostly commissioned by Essex local authority.
- The school currently uses two unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- The headteacher was appointed in May 2024. The deputy headteacher was appointed in July 2024.
- There are currently no pupils on roll in key stage 5.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the school's second additional inspection to monitor progress. The inspection was conducted without notice.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, the inspector met with a representative of the proprietor body. The inspector met on site with the headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector looked at a range of curriculum documents, visited lessons, and looked at pupils' work. The inspector looked at the school's policies, including those for behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspector visited a number of lessons, talked to pupils about their experiences, and looked at their books.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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