

# Cambian Spring Hill School

Palace Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3HN

## Inspection dates

26–28 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher's vision has been embraced fully by staff and governors: 'one community, learning and living together, striving for excellence'. As a result, pupils thrive in this welcoming, caring school. They make often good progress in their learning, from low starting points upon arrival.
- Staff have risen to the headteacher's challenge to improve the quality of teaching, which is now good. Teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that usually take account of pupils' starting points and interests to entice and then sustain them in their learning.
- There is little difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils, boys and girls. Occasionally, work set for the most able pupils in English lessons is too easy. Teachers do not challenge pupils' poor handwriting consistently.
- Teachers, therapists and learning support assistants work closely together to identify, then meet, pupils' complex communication, behavioural and emotional needs. As a result, pupils' behaviour and personal qualities improve well. Their attendance rates rise rapidly.
- The broad curriculum is enriched by a wide range of outdoor activities, visits and visitors to school. These add to pupils' engagement in, and enjoyment of, school, following often very unsuccessful previous school experiences.
- Promotion of equality of opportunity and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development lie at the heart of the school's work. Pupils develop the qualities of respect and trust. They value the individual differences of people within school and the wider community successfully.
- The very small proportion of students in the sixth form achieve well in their chosen options and in the mathematics and English accreditations they take. They move on to their next steps well prepared, not least because of the superb transition arrangements.
- Leaders and governors ensure that all of the independent school standards are met consistently. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Resulting improvement plans are checked regularly but there are too few measurable targets to check the full impact of actions on pupils' progress over time easily.

### 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 so that all pupils can achieve their best by:
  - making sure that the information teachers have about pupils' current abilities is used to provide activities that deepen pupils' learning and hasten their rates of progress, particularly in English and for the most able pupils
  - directing teachers to challenge consistently pupils to improve their handwriting when it starts to deteriorate.
- Ensure that the school improvement plan has measurable targets against which leaders and governors can check more easily the impact of actions taken, particularly the impact of actions on pupils' progress over time.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has energised staff to share his high expectations that pupils will achieve well, and will be safe, happy and prepared successfully for their future lives. Together with the head of education, he is improving all aspects of the school's work. Staff speak convincingly of how there has been a sea change in expectations since the headteacher's arrival and the change in ownership of the school. They value the way that the headteacher has empowered them to lead their subject areas and specialisms and how they are increasingly held to account for the achievements of pupils.
- The headteacher has developed a specialist provision for pupils who have an autistic spectrum diagnosis with associated complex needs. Meticulous pre-admission arrangements make sure that the school is right for each pupil and that each pupil feels the school is right for them. Full account of pupils', staff's, parents' and social workers' views is taken before pupils arrive. Transition plans are then put in place to identify, then meet, pupils' individual needs. These arrangements secure pupils' care, their safety and other pupils' safety, and put pupils back on the path to being successful, happy and confident learners.
- Pupils settle in successfully, often having been out of school for many months and sometimes years. Support for pupils' next steps when they leave the school are equally strong. As a result, all pupils are well prepared for their well-suited chosen destinations. This includes the small number of sixth-form students. The school is increasingly effective in supporting pupils' transfer back into mainstream schools where appropriate.
- Leaders' focus on improving the quality of teaching is effective. Good teaching is contributing to the generally good progress that pupils make in their lessons. Assessment systems are developing. They are used more effectively to identify pupils' starting points and set activities that can deepen, or move pupils on well in, their learning. Leaders know that more needs to be done to embed the systems across the school because, on occasions, work set for the most able pupils is not challenging enough, especially in English.
- Overall, there is little difference between the achievements of disadvantaged pupils, boys and girls. Pupils' progress in English is not quite as strong as it is in mathematics and girls' achievements in English are slightly above those of the boys. Leaders know this and have appointed a specialist leader for English to improve outcomes in this subject.
- Pupils benefit from a carefully planned, broadly based, personalised curriculum that meets their needs and interests well. This is also the case in the sixth form, where great thought is taken to provide a programme of study that meets national requirements and personal preferences. Leaders work closely with local employers and colleges to ensure that pupils and students in the sixth form can access the courses they choose. The strong focus on the development of pupils' numeracy and literacy skills helps pupils to move towards their chronological reading ages.
- Very few pupils are entitled to the government's additional pupil-premium funding. The school receives an allocated fee for each pupil according to their special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pupil premium funding and the special educational needs resources are used well. Each pupil has an individual programme and support plan that is

geared to meeting their individual needs and interests.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Assemblies, the personal, social, citizenship, health and economic curriculum and the religious education curriculum particularly promote these aspects of pupils' development well. The trusting relationships developed and the culture of care and support also contribute well to the development of pupils' personal qualities. A wide range of activities takes place to enable pupils to understand and respect differences in others and to be tolerant of others' views.
- Independent careers education, advice and guidance is strong. Enterprise activities abound and work experience is provided to pupils wherever possible. The development of pupils' life skills is a major element in building pupils' independent skills, the qualities they need to be active citizens in modern Britain and to succeed on their chosen pathways.
- The sixth-form leader has a clear view of the needs of the small number of students in her charge. She is held increasingly to account by the headteacher for the impact of her recent leadership role. Teaching is good. Assessment and transition information identifies clearly students' needs and wishes. Leaders go out of their way to ensure that students' interests are met and accreditations, including for English and mathematics, achieved.
- Arrangements to manage staff performance continue to be tightened up. Leaders regularly observe learning, review pupils' workbooks, individual learning and behaviour plans and check the assessment information that teachers now gather on pupils' progress. This information is used to hold teachers to account more robustly for their pupils' achievements and to identify staff training needs. It also helps to identify any pupils at risk of falling behind so staff can put individual support and activities in place quickly to help pupils catch up to their peers. However, teachers are not challenged consistently to ensure that pupils' handwriting skills improve over time.
- Reports to parents are of high quality. They provide a very clear understanding of their child's progress towards their educational targets that are specific to the national curriculum subjects studied. They also include reviews of progress from any therapies or additional support provided, for example from speech and language therapists. Reports also detail each child's progress towards their individual learning and behaviour plans.

## **Governance**

- The Cambian governance board is complemented by a local governing body. Collectively, they support and challenge leaders well. The regional director visits regularly and keeps a close eye on the school's work.
- Governors have a good understanding about what is working well and what needs to improve. A clear improvement plan has been implemented to address weaker areas and governors check these often. However, the plan has too few measurable targets to enable governors to check fully the impact of actions on pupils' progress over time. Nevertheless, half-termly reports to governors on pupils' learning across the curriculum, their attendance rates, progress towards their individual learning and behaviour plans are checked rigorously.
- The governance board provides strong oversight on all aspects of safeguarding.

## **Safeguarding**

- Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and recruitment procedures robust. Staff are trained regularly in how to identify and respond to any safeguarding or child protection concerns. These includes concerns about sexual exploitation, extremism and risks from social media.
- Staff also have a good understanding of the risks that each pupil faces due to their complex behaviours and specific special educational needs and/or disabilities. Meticulous individual risk assessments and plans are developed to minimise such risks. There is a real culture that the needs of vulnerable pupils will be met and that pupils will be safe. The headteacher and site manager work together to check robustly all health and safety requirements, site, fire safety and security.
- The headteacher has made sure that the school's comprehensive safeguarding policy is on the school's website. It complies fully with the most recent government requirements.
- Partnerships with parents, carers, social workers and local authority child protection services are strong. This means that support and advice is provided quickly to ensure that pupils are safe.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Learning is typified by a calm and purposeful atmosphere. This is not least due to the strong, trusting and respectful relationships developed between staff and pupils and the expert way that staff manage pupils' complex communication and behavioural needs.
- Pupils arrive at Cambian Spring Hill School having suffered often unhappy previous experiences of school. Many have been out of education for months or even years. Their transition into school is carefully managed so that pupils' needs are clearly understood. This enables strategies to be put in place to support them into learning, to develop their confidence, self-esteem and the other personal qualities they will need as they move into adulthood.
- Observations of learning show that pupils adopt good attitudes to their lessons. They stay focused on the tasks in hand and, where able, respond to teachers' questions and follow instructions appropriately. Well-deployed learning support assistants aid pupils' learning effectively and help pupils to work things out for themselves wherever possible.
- Teachers mark pupils' workbooks regularly and pupils reported that this helps them know what their targets are to improve their work. Leaders know there is still more to do to ensure that all staff follow the school's policy fully. They are taking action to tackle this. Teachers do not always challenge pupils' handwriting when it starts to get messy.
- Pupils make generally good progress across a range of subjects. Pupils' workbooks, displays on walls and corridors celebrate the broad curriculum and pupils' achievements. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Daily reading and spelling activities are helping pupils to move towards the reading skills expected for their age. Despite this, achievements in English lag slightly behind those in mathematics.
- Assessment systems have been developed further following the headteacher's arrival and pupils' achievements are tracked half termly. This information, across all subjects, is used by teachers to identify how well pupils are doing and to plan their next steps. Teachers usually plan activities that move pupils on in their learning effectively. However, on

occasions, activities for the most able pupils lack challenge.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The promotion of pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This, and a strong sense of moral purpose, lie at the heart of the school's work. The whole staff team work to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem, to entice them into learning and to prepare them well for their future lives. Such work includes the development of the skills pupils will need to be active citizens in the local and wider community. There is a strong focus on developing the qualities of respect for, and tolerance of, differences in others and in celebrating the diversity of cultures and faiths in modern Britain today. Special 'theme' days and weeks like 'German Christmas', 'British sign language day' and 'autism awareness week' add to the day-to-day work of the school that promotes such qualities.
- Pupils talked convincingly about the difference the school is making to their lives. They reported that they feel very safe and cared for well. Pupils would go to any adult if they had a problem because they know it would be sorted out straight away. They particularly value the small-class groups where they are known as individuals and are given the support they need to manage difficult times and to achieve well.
- There is a real emphasis on pupils' participation in their learning. An electronic system checks pupils' engagement in every lesson. Where any pupils become less focused on their work, staff get onto the problem straight away, to understand why pupils' attention has waned and get them back on track. Half-termly rewards are contributing successfully to pupils' motivation in their learning. Good communication between care staff and teaching staff each day mean that any issues, concerns or any positive aspects of a pupil's day or night can be shared. This information informs the actions that staff take.
- Pupils are taught well about risks to their personal safety. Particularly strong work takes place with pupils and parents regarding risks from social media. Pupils are also taught well about different forms of bullying and say that incidents are rare. They say that any derogatory words or unkind behaviour is stamped on immediately. Detailed records of incidents of poor behaviour show that they are rare and are responded to thoroughly.
- Staff who completed the inspection questionnaire and parents who completed the school's annual questionnaire are highly positive about the education, care and support pupils are afforded in Cambian Spring Hill School. They, too, think that behaviour is well managed and bullying is rare. Leaders carry out pupil questionnaires termly. They provide comprehensive information on pupils' views across academic and social areas of school life. Pupils are highly positive about the school and what it offers them. Written feedback from pupils enables leaders to identify where the priorities for further improvement lie and to follow up any concerns from individual pupils.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff manage behaviour well. Pupils are helped to take more responsibility for managing their own behaviour and to be responsible members of this caring community. The carefully planned arrangements to help pupils settle quickly and the integrated therapeutic support from a range of clinical professionals contribute

effectively to pupils' social, emotional and behavioural development. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive.

- Detailed personal risk assessments and individual behaviour plans are in place for each pupil. These are tracked meticulously and amended when issues arise so staff can minimise any new trigger points or identify new needs. Staff are vigilant in anticipating any risks of pupils at risk of having an emotionally charged outburst. They de-escalate situations calmly. This means that incidents of poor behaviour are rare in class. No pupil has been excluded and incidents that require physical restraint are rare and falling.
- Pupils enter the school after having experienced significant disruption to their education. Consequently, their past attendance rates have often been poor. Attendance rates increase significantly once pupils settle into Cambian Spring Hill School. Rates last year were just below the national average. They dipped last term but still remain above the average for all special schools. Pupils' attendance is tracked meticulously. Great care is taken to make sure that pupils who do not turn up to school are identified quickly and families and carers contacted. This helps to get pupils back into school sharply.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils enter the school at various ages with typically below-average attainment. This is due to significant prior disruption in their education and the nature of their complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Highly effective arrangements for joining the school help pupils to settle in quickly. Most make strong progress from their starting points.
- The small proportion of pupils in the primary phase benefit from a broad curriculum, high staff-to-pupil ratios and one-to-one support. Work is generally planned to meet each pupil's individual academic and communication needs and their interests. This helps them to apply themselves to their learning and make often good progress towards their targets. However, the most able pupils are not always set work that challenges them to make even greater progress in English.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the more practical activities that take place each afternoon. They were seen by the inspectors to follow their individual cake recipes in the kitchen, capably, enthusiastically, responsibly and independently. Because of the personalised approach to meeting each pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities, the very small proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged make good progress like their peers.
- Boys' and girls' achievements are similar in most subjects, with the exception of English, where boys lag slightly behind the girls, mainly due to pupils' writing skills. Daily reading and class books are helping to diminish the differences between pupils' individual reading skills and those expected for their age.
- One-to-one interventions and support are carefully planned to help bridge any gaps in pupils' learning and to help them catch up when they are at risk of falling behind. They are also used well to develop pupils' communication skills, their social and emotional development and to help them achieve their broader personal goals.
- All pupils are able to work towards accreditations in a broad range of subjects from the start of the secondary phase. For example, they take Assessment and Qualification Alliance courses in English, mathematics, science, computing studies, food studies and

the humanities. Most students in the sixth form gain accreditations in English and mathematics. Last year, 86% achieved their targets in English accreditations and 80% in mathematics. Where possible, pupils and students take GCSE subjects, but the range is still small. Work is under way to broaden the range where appropriate for the pupils.

- The successful development of life skills and the wide range of work experience are helping to ensure that all pupils move on successfully to their chosen destinations after school. Once pupils move on to their destinations, there is a programme of support from school staff to smooth transition.



## School details

Unique reference number	142911
DfE registration number	815/6034
Inspection number	10033927

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	Independent school
School category	Residential special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Proprietor	Cambian Group Ltd.
Chair	Anne-Marie Carrie
Headteacher	Alexis Johnson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£76,000
Telephone number	01765 603320
Website	<a href="http://www.cambian.com">www.cambian.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:springhillschool@cambianguroup.com">springhillschool@cambianguroup.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Cambian Spring Hill School is an independent residential special school and is situated on extensive grounds on the outskirts of Ripon, North Yorkshire. It is registered for up to 50 pupils (boys and girls) aged between 8 and 19 years. The residential provision was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2017 and was not part of this inspection.
- There are too few students in the sixth form to report separately on post-16 provision as this would potentially enable the identification of individual students.
- Pupils who attend the school have an autistic spectrum diagnosis and associated social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Consequently all of the pupils have special

educational needs and/or disabilities and have an education, health and care plan.

- Many pupils have been out of formal schooling prior to attending Cambian Spring Hill School. Some pupils have medical needs and all of them have difficulties in the area of social interaction.
- Pupils come from a wide geographic area, mainly in the north of England. Eleven local authorities currently place pupils in the school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has no religious affiliation. No pupils attend off-site alternative provision.
- The school was previously a non-maintained special school, known as Spring Hill School, and was owned by Barnardo's. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and, following registration by the Department for Education in August 2016, the school opened as an independent school under the ownership of the Cambian group.
- This is its first inspection as an independent school.
- The school's aim is for 'one community, learning and living together, striving for excellence'.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes, accompanied by the deputy headteacher. She held discussions with the headteacher, the regional director of the Cambian Group and chair of the governance board, a group of staff, the designated leader for child protection and the site manager. She talked to pupils informally as she visited classrooms and observed lunchtime. She also spoke formally to representatives of the school council. Discussions were also held separately with the recently appointed head of the sixth form and the school's speech and language therapist.
- A wide range of school documents were scrutinised. These included leaders' written evaluation of their work and their improvement plan, safeguarding policies and procedures, and fire, first aid, health and safety policies. The inspector reviewed the information the school has on pupils' achievements over time, checked pupils' workbooks and two examples of reports the governance board receive on the work of the school.
- There were too few parental responses to the Ofsted online survey Parent View, to enable the inspector to see the results. However, the outcomes of the school's own survey to parents was taken into account. The views of the school's recent pupil survey were also taken into account. Fourteen responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered.

## Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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