

Cambian Devon School

Intek House, 52 Borough Road, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7DQ

Inspection dates

3–5 July 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and directors have ensured that the independent school standards (ISS) continue to be met.
- School leaders and the proprietor are relentless in their drive for improvement. They have taken effective action to address weaknesses found at the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of care and education is now good.
- Leaders promote an inclusive, caring and structured environment. Their work for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties is impressive. This enables pupils to learn how to stay safe and make strong academic progress.
- Leaders use visits and off-site provision to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils show great interest and enjoyment in vocational work.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils trust staff and have confidence in them.
- Teachers use education, health and care (EHC) plans effectively to ensure that work is tailored to pupils' individual needs.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are high. This contributes to pupils making strong academic progress. However, there are times when the most able pupils are not challenged enough to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a high-quality curriculum that is adjusted to meet the needs of individuals.
- Pupils' learning behaviours and attitudes are positive. Nonetheless, occasionally pupils' lack of independence and resilience holds them back, most notably in a few academic lessons.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this to take the right actions to improve the school. They recognise the need to improve aspects of their record keeping to bring about even more rapid improvement for the pupils.
- Leaders have taken steps to improve reading across the school. However, pupils do not consistently show positive attitudes or enjoy reading in a range of situations.

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 the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teaching staff:
 - consistently stretch and challenge the most able pupils
 - develop pupils' learning behaviours, particularly their independence and resilience, in some academic subjects or situations.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - improving the quality of record-keeping and use of information to ensure that improvement is even more rapid
 - re-evaluating the school's reading strategy to increase positive experiences and pupils' enjoyment of reading.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders closely monitor and check the quality of care and education in the school. As a result, pupils' outcomes and the quality of care that they receive have improved markedly since the last inspection. Leaders and the proprietor have ensured that the ISS continue to be met in full.
- The proprietor and school leaders work effectively together with a single vision for improvement. There is now an established group of school leaders who have ensured that systems and processes are firmly in place for holding others to account. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved well.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are determined to continue to improve the school on behalf of the pupils. Their commitment to getting the best for every pupil is a hallmark of their leadership. Staff respond positively to this and morale in the school is high.
- Leaders' understanding of, and their work with, pupils who have SEMH needs is impressive. Leaders promote an inclusive, caring and structured approach to the school day and environment. This provides the reassurance and stability that many of the pupils need to be able to access the curriculum and achieve throughout the school day.
- Leaders' and staff's knowledge of every pupil and their particular circumstances are good. The information leaders hold is used effectively to plan activities and learning which are well tailored to the pupils' individual needs. In particular, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that pupils' EHC plans are reflected well in pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). This enables a seamless link and strong focus on what each pupil needs to do to improve.
- Leaders use visits, trips and off-site provision effectively to enhance pupils' learning. These are well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated and show a keen interest in their learning, including the very few pupils in alternative provision. For example, pupils in key stage 4 or post-16 vocational courses relish the personalised learning that these learning opportunities offer to re-engage with education.
- Leaders' self-assessment is accurate. Their detailed self-evaluation of the school's strengths and areas to improve enables them to take the right steps and actions to improve the school. For example, leaders' evaluation and revision of the school's assessment system has enabled them to have a better understanding of pupils' starting points and the progress that they make.
- Leaders work proactively with the local authorities that place pupils at the school. The placing authorities have a high regard for the work of the school. Regular communication and contact, such as through audits, ensure that there is a productive partnership which is to the benefit of the pupils in the school.
- The few parents who responded to Parent View or spoke with the lead inspector are pleased with the improvements that they see in their child at home and school. Parents are effusive in their praise of leaders, saying, for example, that: 'This was my child's last chance. Cambian just did not want to give up... they have saved his future.'

- The premises are well maintained. The teaching areas are orderly and well presented. The outdoor spaces are used for pupils to play and socialise. Leaders deploy staff well to ensure that pupils are supervised appropriately at break and lunchtimes and to manage risks at various points in the school day.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the school's curriculum. For example, pupils study other world faiths and visit other places of worship, such as a synagogue. This work helps to prepare pupils for life in modern day Britain and beyond the school gates.
- Leaders maintain legal records and requirements appropriately, for example risk assessments, as well as admission and attendance registers. They also provide information to placing authorities when required, such as annual reviews of EHC plans. However, they recognise that aspects of their record-keeping are not kept precisely enough or have a few weaknesses. These slow the overall speed of improvement, such as in the refinement of teachers' appraisal and how objectives are used to inform teaching and learning.
- Leaders have appropriate programmes of study for subjects, including English and mathematics. Leaders have also listened to the views of pupils to introduce a library to the school. However, their approach to reading is not enabling pupils to develop positive attitudes or enjoyment of reading during the school day.

Governance

- The proprietor has worked effectively with school leaders to make the necessary improvements from the last inspection. In particular, previously identified shortcomings in teaching and learning have been rigorously addressed.
- The school is overseen by directors of the Cambian Group, including the director of education for schools and settings for pupils with SEMH. The headteacher works closely with the regional education lead. As a result, the proprietor is well informed and offers the right challenge and support 'on the ground' to the headteacher. This support and challenge is supporting the school to continue to improve.
- The regional education lead maintains regular contact with school leaders and undertakes half-termly visits to check the progress of the school. Reports are completed which provide a useful steer for the headteacher. However, these visits, on occasion, lack precision or 'follow up' to bring about even more rapid improvement, for example in developing the use of the school's tracking and assessment systems.
- The proprietor ensures that systems and processes to hold leaders to account are robust. Monitoring, including of the ISS, is effective in contributing towards accurate and reliable self-evaluation.
- The proprietor utilises external audits and checks, including from placing authorities to regulate and monitor the school's work. These provide additional information to inform self-evaluation. The views of a local placing authority support the view that leaders are effective. They readily endorse the work of the school, including for pupils who have an EHC plan and/or children looked after.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The requirements of the ISS regarding safeguarding are met, including the publication of the school's safeguarding policy. The arrangements take into account the latest guidance from the Secretary of State.
- Leaders are proactive and tenacious in safeguarding matters. There is a strong culture for safeguarding pupils. Staff are well trained and know what to do, and how to respond to look after pupils. As a result, timely and appropriate referrals are made to external agencies. These are followed up and actioned by leaders so that the risk of harm is minimised or mitigated. Leaders are assiduous in holding other agencies to account.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after in school. The school's personal, social, health and education (PSHE) curriculum, as well as other therapeutic work, supports vulnerable pupils well. These raise awareness of risks associated with harmful behaviours, such as alcohol or substance misuse. Pupils also told an inspector how to stay safe when working online or what to do in the event of a fire.
- Leaders use individual pupil behaviour plans and risk assessments effectively to minimise or mitigate against risks, including exploitation. The heightened awareness and diligence of staff is a key factor in helping some pupils maintain healthy and safe lifestyles.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know and understand pupils' needs well. In particular, EHC plans are used effectively to match work to pupils' individual needs, enabling them to make good progress.
- Teaching staff and additional adults manage pupils skilfully. They make effective use of strategies, including humour or distraction, to keep pupils interested in their work. They also recognise when and how to diffuse situations so that lessons retain focus with clear objectives for learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They plan sequences of learning that build well on pupils' prior learning. However, there are times when the most able pupils are not challenged well enough, for example in editing and improving their own writing. This slows their progress and prevents them from reaching the standards of which they are capable, particularly in writing and handwriting.
- Teachers plan activities around events which hold pupils' interest. For example, pupils were excited to learn about China through 'Chinese cultural day'. The range of activities, including cooking and trying food, provide enjoyable experiences, which deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects.
- Educational visits and the use of high-quality alternative provision enhance pupils' learning. Some pupils who have suffered a disrupted education before joining the school benefit from teaching to help them reconnect with valuable education opportunities. Pupils in these provisions, including vocational courses, are proud of their work and achieve well, including in essential life skills.
- The quality of teaching for pupils who have complex special educational needs (SEN) is

good. Teachers adapt detailed IEPs to help pupils overcome specific individual learning needs. Parental views are also considered and woven into plans effectively to ensure that pupils' needs are met appropriately.

- On occasion, adults do too much for pupils. When this happens, it reduces the quality of pupils' reasoning and thinking in tasks and detracts from pupils being able to take the initiative to develop resilience, including for speaking, reading and writing.
- The teaching of phonics and early reading programmes to get pupils reading, often from very low starting points, is effective. However, reading is not consistently taught to ensure that pupils are sufficiently motivated to read for enjoyment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of moral dilemmas. For example, they talk cogently about political events, including extremism and terrorism. This helps them to form valid and informed views of the world and life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is well-designed to appeal to pupils, including those who are at risk of exclusion or need support to re-integrate fully. For example, the highly effective therapeutic approach at the alternative providers enables pupils to cope well and produce work of which they are very proud.
- In lessons, pupils are typically responsive and enjoy making valuable contributions. However, when they are not challenged sufficiently or motivated by the task in hand, their levels of interest drop. This is further compounded on those occasions when adults overcompensate for them and their learning behaviours and attitudes, such as independence and resilience deteriorate.
- Older pupils receive high-quality independent careers advice and guidance, which they use to identify qualifications that will help them to succeed. School staff support pupils well, for example in choosing vocational courses and apprenticeships that reflect pupils' interest. Staff also work effectively to provide high-quality support and guidance to those post-16 students who benefit from personalised arrangements to promote independence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have a good understanding of the needs of each pupil. They use this skilfully to interact with pupils, including those who have profound medical needs or SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils are taught about the importance of the local community. They learn about respect and tolerance of other cultures, customs and religions. Pupils told an inspector that they like to 'treat everyone as equals'.
- Pupils benefit from a calming and purposeful environment. They trust staff and respond well to them. The number of incidents requiring physical intervention and positive handling have fallen significantly.
- Well-planned activities in the alternative provision are well matched to pupils' academic

and emotional needs. As a result, pupils respond positively and tackle tasks with enthusiasm and interest.

- The revision of the behaviour management policy from September 2017 sets clear expectations with rewards and sanctions that the pupils understand. Pupils know what is expected of them and enjoy rewards through the school's 'DICE' strategy. This advocates determination, inspiration, courage and equality. This approach is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- There are still some behavioural incidents which occur. However, when these happen, staff respond efficiently to ensure that the school quickly returns to its usual state of orderly calm and purpose.
- Attendance is low. However, this is disproportionately affected by a very few particular individual cases. Leaders are wholly committed to improving the attendance of pupils and fully recognise its importance in keeping pupils' safe and raising their achievement. Pupils and parents confirm the commitment and 'extra lengths' staff go to, including working extensively with other agencies to improve attendance.
- School leaders have been required to exclude pupils for fixed-term periods since the previous inspection and during the academic year. The number of exclusions are steadily declining in comparison with previous years. Exclusion records are comprehensive and comply fully with legal requirements.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress towards the objectives set in their EHC plans. Individualised steps clearly mark purposeful and appropriate milestones, enabling pupils to achieve well, including those who have profound SEMH difficulties.
- From their starting points on entry to the school, pupils settle and then begin to make good progress, including in English and mathematics. The school's own information confirms that pupils who have been in the school for the longest period of time flourish and make increasingly strong rates of progress.
- Recently introduced assessments measure pupils' progress of skills and knowledge across the curriculum. These show an increasing proportion of pupils catching up with their peers, albeit from very low starting points.
- There is no difference between the outcomes of children looked after and other pupils. Pupils are guided and supported to ensure that they meet agreed targets and expectations.
- Pupils make strong progress in the range of subjects, including, for example, humanities and science. Effective use of trips and visits deepens pupils' knowledge of historical events and geography. Well-planned lessons enable pupils to explore complex scientific themes, for example classifying animals in science in key stage 3.
- Pupils in key stage 4 work towards a range of qualifications, including GCSEs, functional skills in English and mathematics, entry-level certificates and unit awards. This prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education.
- Boys heavily dominate the cohort in the school. There are no differences between different groups. However, the most able pupils are not identified and challenged early

enough to make the most rapid progress, particularly in academic studies.

- Outcomes in alternative provision are strong. Talking to pupils and reviewing destinations data show that this is effective in preparing pupils to plan for, and to move into, the next stage of their education, training or employment. However, in the previous cohort, a small number of pupils did not progress to employment, education or training.

School details

Unique reference number	135803
DfE registration number	878/6213
Inspection number	10047185

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	Special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	22
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	C/O Cambian Education
Chair	n/a
Headteacher	Mike Rees-Lee
Annual fees (day pupils)	£51,300
Telephone number	01803 524 537
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/cambiangroup.aspx
Email address	Admin@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	10–12 May 2016

Information about this school

- Cambian Devon School is owned by Cambian Group. The school provides education on two sites in Paignton and Buckfastleigh.
- Cambian Devon School is a small special school catering for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A few pupils also have autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils are currently placed in the school by local authorities, including Devon, Cornwall, Torbay and Somerset. Seven pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- There are currently 22 pupils on roll. All of these have an education, health and care plan. There are 2 students in the sixth form.

- The school uses two alternative providers: The Husbandry School, Bickington and Combe Pafford, Torbay.
- The school's previous standard inspection was undertaken from 10–12 May, 2016, when the school was judged to require improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in a range of subjects in most classes. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' work and information kept by the school about pupils' learning.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, staff and leaders throughout the inspection, including the SENCo, headteacher and English leader.
- The lead inspector met with one director and the regional educational lead from Cambian Group. He scrutinised key plans, including the school development plan, summary self-evaluation and programmes of study. He also reviewed the school's curriculum plan and other information provided by the school.
- One inspector observed pupils learning at the school's off-site alternative provision.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour, exclusions and attendance. School policies and documentation, including risk assessments, EHC plans and IEPs were also examined. In addition, the inspectors visited the Paignton and Buckfastleigh sites to check regulations in line with the ISS.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 16 members of staff who completed Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and considered the views of parents expressed through Parent View, as well as speaking directly through telephone conversations and meeting face-to-face.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Carol Hannaford

Ofsted Inspector

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