

# Cambian Bletchley Park School

Whaddon Way, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK3 7EB

**Inspection dates**

4–6 December 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and those in position of governance have not ensured that safeguarding is effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the necessary pre-employment checks have been made on recently appointed staff.
- Leaders' actions to promote pupils' welfare are inadequate because they have failed to keep detailed records of actions taken following safeguarding concerns.

- The proprietor has not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Inadequate safeguarding arrangements mean that sixth-form provision is also inadequate.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not precise enough. They do not check the success of their actions sufficiently well.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff are highly skilled and totally committed to pupils in their care.
- Teaching is good because staff know pupils well and provide learning experiences that meet pupils' needs effectively.
- Pupils make good progress in their social and communication skills.

- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and what it does for their child. One parent said, 'This is the first time my child has wanted to come to school.'
- Staff have high regard for the recently promoted headteacher. The new lead teachers show great potential and have started to implement their good ideas.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve arrangements to keep pupils safe by:
  - implementing fail-safe procedures so that all the necessary pre-employment checks on staff are always carried out and recorded in the single central register
  - sharpening the recording of safeguarding concerns about pupils to include a chronological evidence base that can be easily retrieved
  - ensuring that staff understand the latest advice from the Secretary of State, including actions concerning peer-on-peer abuse
  - ensuring that destinations of pupils who leave the school are accurately recorded
  - making sure that the safeguarding policy is personalised to all school procedures.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that those responsible for governance check that all independent school standards are met consistently
  - ensuring that external quality assurance audits are acted upon in good time
  - developing lead teachers fully into their role as school leaders
  - developing action plans that set out exactly how to measure the success of leaders' intended actions.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that the most able pupils are given appropriately hard work.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and those responsible for governance have not ensured that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and keep pupils safe from risk of harm. As a result, a number of independent school standards are unmet.
- Leaders recently commissioned an external audit of safeguarding which identified concerns and gave helpful advice to strengthen procedures to keep pupils safe. Despite clear recommendations, they were not implemented fully at the time, and therefore serious shortcomings in safeguarding procedures remain.
- Recent changes in leadership have caused ambiguity because transition to the new leadership structure has not been managed carefully enough. This has meant that some important safeguarding responsibilities have been overlooked and deficiencies have occurred.
- Leaders do not have an accurate view of their effectiveness in keeping pupils safe. Their assessment of other areas of the school is accurate. They have made plans to improve the school but these do not have precise enough detail to enable leaders to measure the success of their actions.
- The new headteacher and recently appointed lead teachers have high ambitions for school. They want every pupil to achieve their personal best. Lead teachers show great promise and are beginning to hone their leadership skills. They have started to implement their good ideas but it is too early to see the impact of their work.
- Staff members' morale is high and leaders support them well. Staff work well together as a highly cohesive team. A member of staff, representing the views of many, said: 'I have never worked with a team who pull together as much as Cambian Bletchley Park School staff.'
- Despite regular and supportive meetings between staff and their line managers, procedures to manage the performance of staff are not developed fully. Leaders' plans to sharpen performance management are yet to be put in place and it is too early to see the impact of these.
- Pupils follow a bespoke and effective curriculum adjusted to meet pupils' interests and complex needs. It is based on developing pupils' communication and social skills. In addition, it focuses on basic literacy, numeracy and physical coordination skills. The curriculum is supplemented with appropriate therapies, including speech, language, communication and occupational therapy. New leaders have plans to enhance the curriculum further with a broader range of subjects, with one saying: 'We want pupils to find their passion so it [the curriculum] ensures that they develop skills to be successful in their chosen area of interest.'
- The curriculum provides numerous opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. An emphasis on business enterprise education is proving successful in developing pupils' organisational and communication skills. Leaders provide effective careers education – a requirement to improve from the last inspection. Recent emphasis on the creative arts is effective in developing pupils' understanding of the world

through art, music and drama. Pupils learn well about other faiths. Pupils are prepared well for life in British society.

- Leaders are developing useful links with other schools – both within and outside the Cambian Group – and share good practice, for example in developing the curriculum.
- Pupils participate regularly in – and greatly enjoy – the lunchtime clubs. They choose from a variety of interesting activities such as music club, relaxation sessions or learning signs. Pupils practise their social and wider skills through numerous visits to the local and wider community. During the inspection, pupils made a visit to a museum and others visited the local shops.
- The local authority that places most pupils at the school has high regard for the school.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. One said, 'I am delighted with the school and cannot praise it enough.' Leaders and all staff work hard to maintain strong relationships with parents. Staff give parents constant feedback on pupils' progress. Parents recognise that staff feedback about their child is a strong feature of the school.

## **Governance**

- Cambian Group's governance arrangements are ineffective because they have not ensured that the independent school standards are fully met.
- While information about the performance of the school in keeping pupils safe is collected and discussed, it does not give an accurate enough indication of the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. The proprietors have not kept a close enough eye on the full range of safeguarding matters.
- Governance arrangements have been strengthened by the recent appointment of a regional education leader with secure knowledge of the independent school standards. Local governance plans – made to tighten school leaders' checks to meet statutory requirements – have yet to be implemented.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- At the start of the inspection, the safeguarding policy on the school's website was out of date, although a hard copy of the updated safeguarding policy was available at the school. During the inspection, the updated policy – based on the model policy provided by Cambian Group – was published on the website. However, some aspects of the policy have not been personalised to the school's own procedures, for example in keeping pupils safe from peer-on-peer abuse.
- Not all the required checks on recently appointed staff had been carried out and recorded in the single central register. These omissions were rectified during the inspection. Fail-safe arrangements to guarantee that pre-employment checks are made are not currently effective.
- Leaders' recording of concerns about pupils do not meet requirements. Records are found in different places. Leaders do not keep an easily scrutinised chronological record of what action was taken, when and by whom. As a consequence, there is not an organised way to check for emerging patterns to keep a pupil safe from harm. Furthermore, such chronological records cannot be easily shared if they are to be needed urgently.

- All staff know the importance of reporting safeguarding concerns immediately to designated safeguarding leaders. However, when school staff raise a concern about pupils' welfare, they are not always kept informed about how their concerns have been managed. At times, a lack of detailed record-keeping means that leaders' actions cannot be checked easily.
- Leaders do not ensure that information about ex-pupils is recorded accurately. Inspection evidence showed that when pupils leave the school, records do not state precisely the destination of the pupil.
- Staff have received regular safeguarding training and they report any concerns they have about pupils diligently. However, staff were not able to demonstrate a sharp enough understanding about the latest updates from the Secretary of State, such as keeping pupils safe from peer-on-peer abuse.

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

- Teachers know their pupils well and personalise learning activities skilfully.
- Pupils' communication and language skills are given the highest priority. Staff use signing systems alongside spoken language to support effectively the development of pupils' learning. Staff use symbols well to help pupils understand their day and make their feelings known. This highly effective approach to teaching communication skills enables pupils to be calm and ready to learn.
- Skilful questioning checks pupils' understanding and deepens learning. Using appropriate communication methods, teachers gently encourage pupils to respond.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together as a team to support learning. Staff embed routines in a highly structured environment, and pupils respond well. Positive reinforcement and praise motivate pupils to learn.
- Teachers carefully plan activities to extract maximum learning opportunities and enable pupils to apply the skills they learn to real-life situations. Invariably, this involves a trip or purposeful activity such as purchasing ingredients in local shops. Pupils then go on to read instructions on their purchases and weigh out ingredients during food technology sessions. Learning has meaning to pupils, and they remain focused and interested as a result.
- Staff are skilled in teaching reading and writing to the most able pupils. They use phonics strategies effectively to help pupils understand sounds and associated letters. Strategies to improve pupils' skills in controlling a pen are successful. Pupils are provided with stimulating material, inspiring them to write sentences and paragraphs. For example, work scrutiny showed that older pupils imagined they were Jewish victims of the Holocaust after reading 'The Diary of Anne Frank' and wrote with accuracy about how they felt.
- Until very recently, teachers' assessments of pupils' progress have not been precise enough. Leaders have developed a new assessment system that records very small steps of progress. Teachers have yet to use this new information effectively to help them plan for next steps in learning.
- While teaching is good overall, there is some variation in its effectiveness. Weaker

teaching provides learning activities that do not inspire pupils. Sometimes, teaching assistants are not proactive in supporting pupils to become independent learners. School leaders are aware of inconsistencies and are striving to make all teaching as good as the best found in the school.

- Some activities for the most able pupils are not demanding enough. Teaching sometimes requires pupils to repeat work they have already mastered.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders have not ensured that procedures to keep pupils safe follow statutory requirements. Consequently, pupils' welfare is not sufficiently provided for.
- Nevertheless, staff know their pupils extremely well and treat them with compassion and sensitivity. There is a full commitment to ensure that pupils and their families are looked after well. Pupils are taught how to communicate their concerns should they need help or feel unsafe. Staff help pupils to understand how to keep safe when using the internet. Parents are highly appreciative of the support the school provides for their children. Parents who were consulted say their child is safe and staff confirm this view.
- Leaders ensure that the health and safety procedures at Bletchley Park School are followed closely. They ensure that detailed files of checks – such as those on fire safety – are kept diligently so that health and safety are monitored well.
- Pupils benefit from a range of creative and physical therapies. These support pupils to become more self-aware and self-managing.
- Pupils benefit from the opportunity to participate in an active school council. Their views are sought on a variety of issues and they learn to express their opinions appropriately.
- Staff encourage pupils to interact socially at lunchtimes. Staff go to great lengths to help pupils understand approaches to social interaction, such as when in a canteen. For example, using symbols, they help pupils to understand how to queue. As a result, pupils learn how to respond in social situations and they grow in confidence.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- When pupils arrive at the school, many display negative behaviour. Staff help pupils to settle through developing positive and trusting relationships with them. Staff are adept at managing pupils' behaviour positively. Over time, because of high expectations and a positive reward system, negative behaviour decreases.
- Pupils are mostly courteous and polite. Staff model good manners and kindness and pupils begin to learn social behaviour, such as asking others how they are.
- Staff work hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Should a pupil be absent from school, it is usually due to medical issues or a problem with transport. One parent, reflecting on her child's improved attendance compared to her previous school, said 'My child loves coming to this school.'

**Outcomes for pupils****Good**

- Pupils enter the school with extreme and complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. They arrive at various ages and at any time during the school year. Often, they have experienced multiple placements or extended periods of time out of school. Almost all have not thrived in previous placements. The vast majority of pupils have difficulties that prevent them from communicating well. All pupils have skills well below those which would be expected for their age. Leaders' first priority is to help pupils develop effective communication skills.
- Once pupils have settled into the school, they quickly improve their speech, language and communication skills because they receive highly personalised teaching. Consequently, they begin to understand others. Their curiosity to learn is ignited and their learning behaviours start to develop. Pupils cope with increasing challenge and make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils' early reading skills – including phonics – enable them to read words accurately and with increasing ability. They apply their reading skills well in a variety of situations. Pupils also make good progress in their writing skills once they are able to control a pen and understand how sounds relate to letters.
- Pupils develop good numeracy skills. They understand the concept of number through counting everyday objects. They learn about arithmetic through real-life examples, such as calculating change when purchasing an item in a shop. The most able pupils use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. These pupils make progress towards the requirements for accreditation, including GCSE mathematics.
- Pupils develop their skills and talents across the curriculum. Pupils make good gains in art, drama and music through various opportunities. Recently, a graffiti artist visited and all pupils in the school took part in a workshop, resulting in a mural that takes pride of place in the school. Pupils are proud of their artistic achievements.
- Teaching staff monitor pupils' progress in a variety of ways. They provide constant encouragement and praise when pupils make improvements. Leaders recognise that their monitoring of pupils' progress in the classroom shows greater gains than indicated by teachers' recorded information. Recently, leaders have sensibly revamped the recording system to enable teachers to document smaller steps in pupils' achievements so that progress can be monitored more precisely. It is too early to see the impact of this important work.
- Pupils sometimes lack resilience when tackling difficult work. While teaching supports pupils well in these circumstances, occasionally, the most able pupils could make stronger progress in their academic achievement.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next stage of education. Most pupils go on to attend the school sixth form as it is fully integrated into the school.

**Sixth form provision****Inadequate**

- The sixth-form provision is inadequate because safeguarding failings in the whole-school arrangements also apply to this part of the school. Consequently, the welfare of sixth-form students is not assured.
- While leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards have been met, there are notable strengths in the leadership of this phase. Leaders have high ambitions for their students and work tirelessly to ensure a high standard of education. They have developed a highly bespoke curriculum which has a strong programme of careers education.
- Sixth-form students receive good teaching. Emphasis is rightly placed on developing independent living skills. There are positive working relationships between adults and students. Teachers challenge students appropriately, providing them with real-life examples whenever possible.
- Students learn about the risks they may encounter and how to look after themselves. Teachers help them to understand about the dangers of radicalisation and substance misuse. Pupils show a growing maturity and become more aware of the world around them. Sixth-form students provide good role models for younger pupils.
- For the students for whom it is appropriate, work experience is provided as an integral part of their study programme. Work placements – such as at a local children's farm – enable students to learn a range of skills in a different environment. Regular trips to the community prepare students well for their future lives.
- Students make good progress in the sixth form, especially in their communication skills and personal development. Students obtain accreditation, including functional skills qualifications at the appropriate level.
- As the school opened three years ago, the oldest pupils in the school will be leaving the school at the end of this academic year. Students receive high-quality information and guidance to find exactly the right placement, including supported work placements and college courses. Retention is very high and the vast majority of students stay until the end of the sixth form.

## School details

Unique reference number	142322
DfE registration number	826/6015
Inspection number	10055031

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	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Cambian Group
Chair	Anne Marie Carrie
Headteacher	Laura Sharman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,963
Telephone number	01908 048 380
Website	<a href="http://www.cambiangroup.com">www.cambiangroup.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:bletchleyschool@cambiangroup.com">bletchleyschool@cambiangroup.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–13 October 2016

## Information about this school

- Cambian Bletchley Park School opened in 2015 in purpose-built premises. It has places for up to 60 pupils.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans funded by local authorities. Almost all pupils have been diagnosed with conditions associated with autism. Many have

communication difficulties and challenging behaviour which require a high level of staff support.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of Cambian Group, which owns more than 40 schools and colleges nationwide. There is no governing body, and leaders are held to account by a director of education. A recently appointed regional education lead provides additional support and challenge.
- Until October 2018, the school was led by an executive headteacher. Since then, the former head of school has been appointed as headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with no notice. It was commissioned by the Department for Education because of concerns about the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, lead teachers and a selection of staff. Inspectors also considered 22 responses from staff to the online questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with Cambian Group's area lead of education, and the lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the director of education.
- Inspectors considered one response to the online questionnaire provided for parents. An inspector held telephone conversations with several parents and met one other parent.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. All lessons were visited jointly with lead teachers. Inspectors visited lunchtime clubs and observed the lunch break.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work was carried out by inspectors. They also viewed case studies across year groups. Inspectors also spoke to a number of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including school policies, school improvement plans, information relating to the behaviour of pupils, safeguarding records and minutes from meetings.

## Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school must meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

#### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
  - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
  - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ('S') appointed on or after 1 May 2007, whether-
    - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
    - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ('S'), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

#### **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; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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