

Inspection of Cambian Whinfell School

110 Windermere Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5EZ

Inspection dates: 2 to 4 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' education and welfare provision at Whinfell School makes a significantly positive difference to their lives. Pupils achieve well after previous, negative experiences of education. Many pupils improve their attendance dramatically once they join the school. They develop trusting relationships with staff. Pupils engage successfully in their education due to the strength of these relationships.

Pupils develop secure skills and knowledge that they have not achieved elsewhere. Leaders have high expectations for pupils. They reach personalised and highly ambitious goals because of the strong curriculum and expert support they receive. This prepares them very well for their future.

Pupils are happy and safe. They show high levels of respect and kindness towards adults and each other. Leaders' and staff's expertise mean that pupils' behaviour is exceptionally well supported. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is very rare. Any incidents are resolved quickly and sensitively by staff.

Parents and carers know that staff look after their children effectively. Parents who spoke to the inspector commented that the exemplary support their children receive has 'changed their lives and given them hope'.

Pupils take part in activities to raise money for charities and take part in local art exhibitions. They are proud of the work they have undertaken to support the local homeless shelter. Pupils particularly value the outdoor learning provision. This develops their leadership skills, resilience and confidence. These activities develop pupils' social skills and prepare them for adult life.

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

Leaders work successfully, addressing pupils' needs through the personalisation of a broad, coherently planned and ambitious curriculum.

Teachers deliver the curriculum with much confidence. They feel extremely well supported by subject leaders. The content within subjects is delivered in a logical order. Pupils' learning builds on what they already know and can do. This contributes strongly to pupils applying their previous learning confidently when they meet new ideas and concepts. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding across the curriculum. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education or training.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They clearly understand the content of various courses and qualification requirements in their subjects. These include functional skills, GCSEs and A levels. They devise well-planned programmes of study and are adept at reshaping these programmes to further develop pupils' learning. This helps pupils, including sixth-form students, who have had gaps in their education to engage well with learning. As a result, they achieve well in all subjects.

Teachers make sure that pupils' language and communication skills develop well so that they learn a wide vocabulary. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of authors and share books with them. Pupils are enthusiastic and talk with confidence about their reading. The highly effective way staff develop pupils' vocabulary and prediction skills enables pupils to read fluently and to comprehend what they read.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment. They receive high-quality careers information, guidance and support. The school's programme of activities includes visiting speakers from a wide range of industries, for example engineering. Pupils take part in work experience in the local area. In addition, teachers provide support for pupils when they apply for jobs and college courses.

The work to promote pupils' personal development is exemplary. Many pupils lack confidence when they join the school. A focus on well-being is fundamental to the school's work. Staff have great success in developing pupils' character. They successfully raise pupils' aspirations. Staff also develop the way pupils think about others. In this way, pupils respect and celebrate the differences in others.

Pupils enrich their learning through an extensive range of opportunities. They take part in clubs based on their interests, such as computing and boxing. They benefit from being part of a pupil voice committee. Staff also support pupils to develop life skills through visits to supermarkets and restaurants. Pupils value these opportunities and say they have been able to try activities and achieve things they never thought they would.

The proprietor body and governors are clear about their roles in ensuring the development of the school. They have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards. They provide effective challenge and support to leaders. The accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor body has put in place efficient and effective systems for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Risk assessments are detailed. Any identified or reported concerns are dealt with swiftly. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. The proprietor body has also ensured that the website contains the relevant contact details for the school.

Staff told inspectors how proud they are to be part of the school. They also said that leaders provide support if needed. Staff appreciate how senior leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors oversee the school's safeguarding procedures effectively. Leaders respond to concerns quickly, referring pupils to other agencies when required. Leaders make

sure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are adapted precisely to the needs of the pupils. The culture of safeguarding in the school is strong.

Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities with reference to current safeguarding legislation and guidance. Therefore, staff are very effective in dealing with any concerns. Leaders work cooperatively with parents and outside agencies to support pupils to be safe.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe when online. This enables them to make positive choices, for example in their use of the internet. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. Parents are extremely supportive of school leaders and staff.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	134781
DfE registration number	909/6054
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10206010
Type of school	Independent school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Whinfell School Limited
Chair	Naseem Akhtar
Headteacher	David Glaves
Annual fees (day pupils)	£86,138
Telephone number	01539723322
Website	www.cambianguroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/asperger-schools/whinfell-school/
Email address	whinfell.admin@cambianguroup.com
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 May 2018

Information about this school

- This inspection was carried out at no notice at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. There was a focus on Part 3, Part 5 and Part 8 of the independent school standards.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, personal, social and health education, art and design and mathematics. They held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and scrutinised their work.
- In addition, inspectors considered other subjects as part of this inspection. They held discussions with the subject leaders, sampled work and talked to pupils.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders and reviewed documentation related to safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the proprietor group and curriculum leaders. They reviewed a range of documentation, including that related to the school's self-evaluation and governance.
- Inspectors talked to staff and pupils. They analysed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the free-text response. They also talked to three parents. They analysed the responses to the staff questionnaire and three responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Emmett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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