

Inspection of Cambian Hartlepool School

Unit E, Sovereign Way, Sovereign Park, Hartlepool, TS25 1NN

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school where pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils are taught in small groups by specialist staff. Pupils behave well and do not disrupt the learning of others. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens and if it did staff would sort it out quickly.

Pupils who come to this school have often missed a lot of education. Staff at Cambian Hartlepool build positive and supportive relationships with pupils. Most pupils settle quickly and attend well.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. All pupils follow national curriculum subjects and a wide range of vocational courses. Pupils gain qualifications that include entry-level certificates, GCSEs and BTEC National Diplomas. Pupils are proud of their school and what they achieve in their lessons.

The headteacher gathers information on pupils before they join the school. Teachers also check what pupils know and can do in their subjects. Each pupil has an individual learning plan. Staff implement these plans well. The headteacher knows that staff need more information on pupils' speech and language needs. The proprietor has recently appointed a speech and language therapist to support the school in this area.

Leaders encourage reading and staff help pupils become more confident readers. This support works well for pupils who are independent readers but not so well for pupils who have missed a lot of phonics teaching in their previous schools. Leaders are introducing a new phonics teaching programme to address this issue.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. Subject plans are well sequenced and broken down into key learning steps. Pupils can describe what they are learning and how it links to what they have learned previously. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. Teachers provide pupils with constant feedback and encouragement. Pupils show a sense of achievement and pride in their work.

Leaders recognise the importance of pupils becoming confident readers. Pupils have books that reflect their interests and match their reading levels. Staff support pupils' reading in lessons and additional catch-up sessions. Pupils read for pleasure during social times. Leaders recognise that some pupils are at the early stage of reading when they join the school. Leaders are introducing a new phonics teaching programme for pupils who have gaps in their phonics knowledge. This scheme is not yet in place.

The headteacher ensures that each pupil has an individual learning plan that describes what support they need in lessons. However, the information on pupils' speech and language needs is not as detailed as it could be. The proprietor has

allocated a specialist in speech and language therapy to help staff identify and understand pupils' speech and language therapy needs. This work is still at an early stage of development.

Pupils behave well around the school and are polite to visitors. Most pupils attend regularly and have positive attitudes to learning. In recent years, no pupil has been permanently excluded and very few pupils have had temporary suspensions from school.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is detailed and well planned. Pupils learn how to be healthy and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know about protected characteristics and the importance of respecting people who may be different to themselves. The PSHE programme includes a qualification in emotional health and well-being. Pupils are knowledgeable about mental health issues. The PSHE leader contributed to the proprietor's policy on relationships and sex education (RSE). The headteacher consulted parents about this policy.

Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education or training. Pupils learn about careers and employability in their PSHE lessons. Pupils have meetings with an independent careers adviser who comes in from the local authority. In recent years, all school leavers have gone into further education or training.

There is a wide enrichment offer that supports pupils' personal development. Pupils run several charity events throughout the year. For example, at Christmas, pupils set up a toy bank and distributed presents to children in their local community. The enrichment offer includes involvement in art competitions, learning new sports such as go-karting and going on school trips. Before COVID-19 limited the range of school trips, the whole school would go to London each December. This trip gave pupils an experience of their capital city.

The headteacher constantly models the high expectations he has of his staff team. Staff implement well-established school routines with confidence. The proprietor has set up subject networks to help teachers keep in touch with their subject and share best practice across the proprietor group. Staff value the support provided by the headteacher. Staff have full confidence in leaders and pride in the school.

The proprietor has a central staff team which brings additional leadership capacity to the school. The proprietor's central lead for this school is an ex-headteacher who has worked in mainstream schools and specialist settings. The lead supports and challenges the headteacher effectively. The proprietor conducts regular audits of the school's provision and performance in addition to challenging leaders during termly governance meetings. The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. This includes the proprietor's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Parents are positive about the school and value the strong communication between school and home. Referring local authorities speak highly of the school. One local authority representative said of the school staff, 'They are absolutely amazing, they understand our young people and go above and beyond to support them.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff understand that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are vulnerable. Pupils trust staff and know who to talk to if anything is worrying them. The designated lead for safeguarding (DSL) knows how to refer to external agencies for help when pupils need this. The DSL records and monitors the progress of any referrals carefully. The DSL is supervised and well supported by the headteacher.

The proprietor provides all staff with training in safeguarding and child protection. The DSL has received enhanced training. The school safeguarding policy is published on the school website. This policy is compliant with government guidance. The proprietor ensures that the school's premises, equipment and fire safety systems are in safe working order.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Reading is prioritised by leaders who encourage a love of reading in their pupils. However, school leaders have not made sure that staff have the resources or skills to deliver phonics effectively. This means that those pupils who join the school and are still at the early stage of reading are not gaining phonics knowledge securely. School leaders should ensure staff have access to a resourced, sequential and validated phonics teaching programme. School leaders should review staff's phonics knowledge and provide appropriate training.
- Leaders gather information on the SEMH needs of pupils when they join the school. This helps teachers develop individual learning plans for pupils. However, teachers do not have access to enough information on pupils' expressive and receptive understanding of spoken language. This is limiting the impact of individual learning plans and intervention support for some pupils. School leaders should ensure staff have access to comprehensive information on pupils' speech and language needs.

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	135424
DfE registration number	805/6002
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10212945
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	CareTech Holdings PLC
Chair	Farouq Rashid Sheikh
Headteacher	Paul Barnfather
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37275 to £47244
Telephone number	01429 224965
Website	https://www.cambiagroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-hartlepool-school
Email address	paul.barnfather@cambiagroup.com
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 February 2018

Information about this school

- Cambian Hartlepool School is part of the Cambian Group. The Cambian Group is owned by CareTech Holdings PLC, a leading provider of residential settings and specialist schools.
- This is an independent special school for pupils aged 10 to 18 with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils may also have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan but this is not a requirement to be admitted to the school.
- The school has capacity for 18 pupils, with 16 pupils on roll at present.
- The proprietor group provides the function of governance. The proprietor carries out weekly and monthly audits of the school's premises and provision. The proprietor has a termly governance meeting with the headteacher.
- The school has no specific specialism or religious affiliation.
- The school is based on one site and does not use any alternative education 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 inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders including those responsible for safeguarding. They also met with a range of other staff and the proprietor.
- Inspectors undertook a tour of the school and visited the classrooms, social areas and other facilities. They checked the school buildings and grounds against the independent school standards.
- Inspectors did deep dives into English (including reading), mathematics, creative arts and PSHE. The deep dive for each subject included a meeting with curriculum leaders and a review of subject documents and plans. The deep dive also involved lesson visits, meetings with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school throughout the day, including breaktimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents and the arrangements to safeguard pupils. This included checking the school's safeguarding systems and the single

central record of staff recruitment checks, meeting with the DSL and speaking with staff and pupils about safeguarding.

- A small number of parents and carers submitted responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered surveys completed by five staff. They met with pupils to gain their views.
- Inspectors spoke to representatives from local authorities who commission places at the school.

Inspection team

Patricia Head, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Moira Banks

Ofsted Inspector

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