

Inspection of Cambian Lufton College

Inspection dates:

28–30 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Information about this provider

Cambian Lufton College is an independent specialist college based in Somerset. It caters for students with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and behavioural and emotional difficulties. The college offers residential and day provision for students between 16 and 25 years of age. It includes students who are based at the college for 52 weeks a year. At the time of inspection, there were 24 students enrolled, the majority of whom are residential and live in homes that are in, or close to, the college campus.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students are not yet benefiting from a well-designed programme of study. Tutors are not planning learning sessions well enough, and students do not always complete meaningful activities during the sessions. Students are not all being challenged to reach their fullest potential. Students' attendance and punctuality are poor. As a result, nearly half the students do not develop the wider skills required for them to cope well with adulthood.

Students enjoy the nevertheless limited additional learning and development opportunities that are available to them, such as all three levels of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, volunteering opportunities and independent life skills, including cooking and budgeting. Students believe they have a voice at the college because they can be part of the student council and contribute their views. Students are provided with independent careers advice and guidance that helps them make decisions about their futures. Most students who attend sessions are keen to learn. Students show respect and listen to others' views. Students are safe and feel safe while attending the college.

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

Leaders and managers are not yet doing enough to tackle the poor quality of education. They have, however, reviewed the structure and curriculum of the college and are in the process of developing a coherent new curriculum for students. This has yet to have an impact.

Most tutors complete tasks set for students rather than letting them work through it themselves. They do not check students' understanding of what they have been taught well enough, nor do they use assessment effectively to monitor students' progress. Tutors' teaching is too often uninspiring and does not challenge or motivate all students to learn.

Students have comprehensive behaviour plans in place which include information designed to help staff deal with any sudden changes in students' behaviour. However, tutors and support assistants are not routinely using these plans to prepare students for specific activities or to manage difficult situations. For example, a tutor and support assistant's lack of preparation put an unwilling student under pressure to participate in an activity. This ended badly, with the tutor having to physically intervene.

Nearly half of the students on the independent living programme are not benefiting from working in groups with their peers. Consequently, they are not developing their social and communication skills sufficiently.

Teaching staff have completed useful training in how best to manage students' attendance and punctuality. Nevertheless, this has yet to make either a significant or sustained improvement in improving students' attendance, and their punctuality is still too often poor. During the inspection, students living on site did not always attend sessions or had to be woken up when late. Students who arrive late to sessions are not challenged by tutors.

Leaders have introduced training for tutors to develop individual learning programmes that challenge students and enable them to make good progress. It is too early to judge the impact of this training on students' learning.

Leaders have not developed an extensive curriculum for students' personal development. Students have only a limited choice of activities to take part in outside of the timetabled programme to develop their interests and talents. This curriculum is particularly narrow for residential students. All students attend performing arts classes, but those who have not chosen to do so are unwilling participants. They would prefer other options, such as bowling, storytelling or using computers. There are very limited opportunities for students to participate in sports and leisure activities.

Tutors do not use their teaching support assistants well enough in learning sessions to enable students to develop resilience, confidence and independence. This hinders the students' transition to adulthood. For example, tutors do not always share session plans with these assistants. As a result, the assistants are unsure of what help to provide students other than simply encouraging them to participate or to behave appropriately.

Students can visit a newly established 'employment hub', where they receive appropriate advice and guidance about their future employment plans. However, tutors do not then take account of students' career choices in order to prepare them for further education, training, employment or living more independently. Managers review local labour needs to match student work opportunities in preparation for employment, but there has been a lack of placements due to the pandemic.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that the curriculum is preparing students well enough for life in modern Britain. Students do not have sufficient depth of knowledge about how to protect themselves from radicalisation, extremist views or understand how to be active citizens who contribute positively to society.

Staff know their students well. Most have a calm and patient approach which supports learning. They speak clearly when giving instructions or providing guidance. As a result, the majority of students who attend sessions take part in their learning. Most positively, students working in the kitchens receive a warm welcome from staff, arrive on time, in clean clothes, and follow rules, such as washing their hands, willingly. Students understand staff's expectations for their behaviour and attitude while on work experience or volunteering.

Tutors make good use of the extensive college facilities to maximise students' participation in practical activities. For example, in the land-based programme, there is the capacity for wet and dry weather activities, such as making wooden plant labels or collecting windfalls for animal feed.

Most students understand how to keep themselves healthy and the importance of a balanced diet. If any student's health or diet becomes a concern, managers intervene and provide support. Managers monitor individual student's progress using safeguarding meetings. Some students benefit from gym sessions to promote their physical health, but only a few of the learners who have the cognitive capability recognise how keeping physically well has a positive impact on their mental health.

In order to improve students' experience of their programmes, leaders and managers seek students' views. Students with different educational needs can freely express their opinions and points of view. Students who use non-verbal communication are supported well, so that they can share their views through signing, using pictorial sheets and email. Student feedback is collated and used well to inform leaders' overall improvement action planning.

Staff have developed positive relationships with the local community and employers. Students benefit from volunteering opportunities in the local area, such as working with alpacas and gardening at a National Trust site.

Governors understand the college's strengths and weaknesses and have developed the senior leadership team in a caring and supportive way. They recognise that much is work in progress. They have contributed effectively to ensuring that safeguarding meets statutory requirements, and they manage ongoing compliance by completing regular audits on the single central record and recruitment processes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Procedures have been revised since the previous inspection and there is a positive culture of keeping students safe. Staff are vigilant and record incidents promptly. Information is shared swiftly with managers, who then act quickly to resolve or refer the case to a specialist agency. Staff have developed good relationships with multiple agencies. Staff quickly de-escalate peer-on-peer behavioural issues and take action to reduce their reoccurrence.

Students could explain how they stay safe when working online. Curriculum planning to introduce students to topics in depth, such as the Prevent duty, toxic masculinity or avoiding eating disorders is still being developed. Similarly, staff are at an early stage of raising students' awareness of the risks of sexual violence and harassment.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Rapidly finalise an ambitious and high-quality curriculum that enables students to swiftly develop new skills, knowledge and behaviours that enable them to be successful in life.
- Ensure teachers work effectively with support assistants to share and use assessment outcomes effectively to monitor students' progress and plan individual learning that develops their skills, knowledge and behaviours.
- Implement clear strategies to ensure students attend well and are punctual at sessions and ready to learn.
- Expand the opportunities for students to participate in volunteering, work experience and paid employment in the vocations they wish to work in.
- Create an enrichment programme that all students can participate in willingly, and that helps improve their personal development and social skills.
- Identify the local risks of radicalisation and extremism and ensure staff use this information to provide training to students of the risks they may encounter.

Provider details

Unique reference number	131921
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Principal/CEO	Sophia Cursons
Provider type	Independent specialist college
Dates of previous inspection	25 to 27 June 2019
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Head of Education as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection reports. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students' work, seeking the views of students, staff, and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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Christine Lacey	Ofsted Inspector

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