

Inspection of Cambian New Elizabethan School

Quarry Bank, Hartlebury, Worcestershire DY11 7TE

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff know pupils really well. They step in and provide support if they notice a change in a pupil's behaviour, or if they sense a pupil is becoming anxious. Pupils, some of whom have been out of education for some time prior to joining the school, appreciate this. Older pupils adopt increasingly positive attitudes towards their learning. However, some of the younger pupils, many of whom are still settling into school, find this more challenging.

There is a strong sense of pastoral care across the school. Staff adopt a range of strategies to help pupils understand and manage their emotions. Consequently, pupils feel safe. A pupil commented, 'As soon as we drive past the bridge, I know I am on my way into school, and I feel happy.' Many pupils echo this view.

Pupils understand the definition of bullying and the different forms it takes. Bullying is very rare. Staff deal with any incidents quickly and keep an eye on any pupils who have been involved.

Leaders have introduced a range of positive changes across the school. However, there is more to do to make sure that the curriculum and teaching support pupils to achieve well.

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

In a range of subjects, including mathematics, leaders have thought carefully about the order of learning within each year group and across the school. As a result, teachers are clear about the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn, and how this links to what they have learned before. However, in some subjects, including English, this is not the case. In these subjects, lessons are not as well connected, and pupils are not achieving as well as they could.

All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The multi-disciplinary clinical team is an integrated part of the school and works closely with leaders and staff. The team provides useful guidance and support, so staff can cater for pupils' specific needs. This close working relationship helps to support pupils' overall learning experience.

Where teachers have secure subject knowledge, they explain new learning in a logical, structured manner. They check that pupils have learned the intended curriculum and adapt their teaching if required. Teaching resources are well selected and support learning. However, where teachers do not have secure subject knowledge, this is not the case. In these instances, pupils do not do well.

Reading has a high priority in the school. Staff are working hard to develop pupils' love of reading, especially as many pupils join the school with a negative view of books and reading materials. Pupils are provided with lots of opportunities to read books and practise their reading. A range of reward systems are in place to promote

this. Phonics interventions are also in place for weaker readers. However, currently, there is not a whole-school phonics programme in place to identify and fill gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge for those pupils who are at the early stages of reading. Leaders are aware of this and are in the process of purchasing a whole-school phonics programme.

Support staff understand what makes the pupils in their care tick. They are always close at hand to give reassurance and help pupils manage their emotions and behaviour. However, there is variability in terms of how well support staff help pupils with their learning. Some engage with pupils and support the learning process. However, this is not the case in all classrooms. Where the support is not as effective, pupils do not engage with their learning as well as they could.

In the sixth form, independent living and preparing for the world of work are paramount. This is supported by the curriculum and weekly work experience opportunities. Examination board syllabuses in a range of subjects clearly map out the direction of learning across the sixth form. Leaders ensure that English and mathematics have a high priority. Students study a range of qualifications, including GCSEs and functional skills. Staff across the sixth form have secure subject knowledge. This enables them to deliver the curriculum effectively, so that students achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is threaded through the fabric of the school. Many pupils are feeling increasingly positive about themselves and their abilities. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. School trips are planned to reward good behaviour. Some trips, such as the visit to an art gallery, support learning in specific subjects. Pupils' knowledge of healthy lifestyles is developing, including their understanding of mental health. There are a range of opportunities for pupil leadership. These include the school council, running the social café, working as site supervisors and mentoring roles.

Staff encourage pupils to think about their future and the world of work from an early age. Careers education begins in Year 4 and continues in subsequent years. Staff guide pupils to consider their personal interests and abilities when considering future career choices. Practical support on how to apply for a job and work experience opportunities in Year 11 and the sixth form support this process. Many pupils are clear about the next steps in their education and training, as well as their preferred career choices.

School leaders, supported by the staff, are working well to improve the school further. Leaders have organised a range of training linked to meeting pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff value this. Staff enjoy working at the school. They say that leaders have an open-door policy, listen to their views and are considerate of their well-being. The Cambian group has effective systems in place that enable the proprietor to monitor standards across the school. The governance board, on behalf of the proprietor, supports and challenges leaders in relation to school performance in a range of areas.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and that a suitable accessibility plan is in place.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietor has made sure that staff, including those responsible for the leadership of safeguarding, are well trained. Leaders and staff are aware of the additional risks pupils with SEND may face. Staff are alert to any changes in a pupil's mood or behaviour that may indicate a safeguarding concern. Training includes updates linked to government guidance, as well as specific training linked to sexual violence and harassment. Pupils speak with confidence about the dangers associated with the internet and social media.

The safeguarding policy meets current government guidance and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, including English, the curriculum is not clearly set out. In these subjects, lessons do not build on what pupils have learned previously. As a result, pupils' knowledge and skills do not build well over time. Leaders need to map out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in these subjects across the school.
- In some areas of the curriculum, teachers' subject knowledge is not secure. In these instances, teachers are not delivering the curriculum effectively. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders need to make sure that teachers are given the required support to improve their subject knowledge and teaching expertise.
- For some pupils at the early stages of reading, staff are not accurately identifying gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. As a result, phonics teaching is not as focused as it could be and gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge are not addressed in a coordinated manner. Leaders need to support staff so they can accurately identify gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge, so that more focused phonics teaching and interventions can be put in place.
- There is variability in terms of how well support staff help pupils with their learning. Where support is not effective, pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders need to provide support staff with the support and/or training they require, so that they can support pupils more effectively with their learning.

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	117030
DfE registration number	885/6021
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10212762
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	45
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Farouq Sheikh
Headteacher	Sara Ferguson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,300 to £92,422
Telephone number	01299 250258
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/autism-schools/new-elizabethan-school/
Email address	sara.ferguson@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 November 2017

Information about this school

- Cambian New Elizabethan School is an independent special day school. It is situated in the village of Hartlebury in Worcestershire.
- All pupils on roll have an EHC plan. The school caters predominantly for pupils with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have been out of education for some time prior to joining the school.
- The school is made up of three departments: lower school, upper school and the sixth form.
- Several local authorities, including Worcestershire, Birmingham and Dudley, place pupils in the school.
- Most students arrive and leave the school by local authority-funded transport.
- The new headteacher has been in post since the start of the autumn term 2021.
- The school uses an unregistered alternative provider.
- The school's last full inspection was in November 2017. The school was judged to be good.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of 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 school leaders and have taken this into account in the evaluation.
- The lead inspector conducted a video call with the managing director of education services, who is the proprietor's representative. He met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the regional education lead, who is also the chair of the governance board.
- Inspectors held meetings with the safeguarding team, the two special educational needs coordinators, attendance and behaviour leads, and other school leaders.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, geography, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Three separate groups of pupils accompanied inspectors on learning walks around the school.
- An inspector visited the unregistered alternative provider that some pupils attend.
- The lead inspector toured the school premises to check their suitability.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors were unable to consider responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, due to the small number of responses. The lead inspector considered the free-text responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records and attendance information.
- The inspectors looked at information published on the school's website.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Leonard

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Price

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught.

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.

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