

Inspection of Purbeck View School

Northbrook Road, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1PR

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Purbeck View School is coming out of an unsettling time. Frequent changes in leadership and staffing have stalled leaders' efforts to secure continued improvements to the quality of education. Nonetheless, current leaders are ambitious. They are taking positive action to revamp the curriculum. However, some of this work is in the early stages.

Most pupils have experienced significant disruption to their education before joining the school. Pupils are well cared for by skilled staff who take the time to get to know their individual needs. This personalised approach is a strength of the school. It contributes to pupils feeling safe, including from bullying.

Staff are attentive to the needs of every pupil. They step in quickly and calmly if pupils need help to manage their behaviour and emotions. Staff resolve incidents effectively. Pupils trust staff.

Staff nurture pupils' personal development well. They provide many experiences to develop their talents and interests. These range from trampolining to cooking and music therapy. Weekly enrichment sessions help to broaden pupils' independence and knowledge of life skills. Pupils show interest and enjoyment in swimming, taking part in recycling projects and working towards food hygiene qualifications.

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

Leaders, including the regional director and the proprietor, know the school well. Recent action from the proprietor to strengthen the leadership capacity is paying off. The interim principal has a secure grasp of the independent school standards. Governors hold leaders to account effectively on matters such as health and safety and the safeguarding of pupils. The proprietor has ensured that the school meets the independent school standards.

Leaders have taken decisive action to evaluate and improve the school's broad curriculum. In many subjects, such as physical education (PE), they have mapped out the important knowledge and skills pupils need to learn. Staff break learning down into small manageable steps. This helps pupils to increase their knowledge incrementally. However, in a few subjects, much of this work is new. The curriculum is not as well designed in some subjects as it is in others. Occasionally, pupils experience disconnected learning that does not deepen their understanding well enough. When this happens, it slows the progress that some pupils make through the curriculum.

Leaders place great importance on pupils' communication and language skills. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and songs. Staff are experts in tailoring support and resources to meet pupils' individual needs. For example, they use high-quality signs and symbols to help pupils express their opinions, including for non-verbal pupils. This gives pupils a voice and the ability to make informed choices.

Despite the many strengths to help pupils communicate effectively, staff do not target support precisely enough for those who struggle to read. Teachers follow a suitable phonics programme. However, the assessment systems in place do not pinpoint the specific gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. This means that some of the weakest readers do not get the right help they need to catch up and become fluent readers.

Leaders place a sharp focus on meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. By working with a range of professionals, staff are well informed about pupils' needs and how best to support them to overcome any barriers to learning. Staff act as positive role models. They teach pupils to recognise and communicate their emotions. This helps them to regulate how they are feeling. Consequently, the school is a calm place to learn. Leaders analyse patterns of behaviour closely. They adjust pupils' personalised behaviour plans when needed. Over time, incidents of poor behaviour have decreased significantly.

Leaders thread aspects of pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education through lessons and beyond the classroom. Pupils take particular pride in celebrating each other's successes in the weekly 'wow assembly'. Staff use songs, news and stories to explore themes such as disability, mental health and difference. They ensure that pupils are well prepared for living in a diverse society. Leaders fulfil the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders encourage pupils to think about the next stage of education and adult life. Pupils receive advice about career paths available to them. Most take part in volunteering and complete work placements at a local golf club. These and other experiences help pupils to develop the confidence to become more independent in their lives.

Numerous leadership changes have limited leaders' work to check on the quality of education pupils receive. Leaders and governors recognise this. They have introduced a robust monitoring system. However, it is too soon for leaders to judge the full impact of these changes on pupils' learning.

Leaders and staff work as a united team. They are proud to work at Purbeck View. Many say that it is 'a great place to work'. Staff value the programme of ongoing training to develop their practice and expertise.

Most parents and carers are positive about the care and guidance their children receive. Many praise the commitment of staff and how they help their children learn valuable life skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place the highest priority on ensuring pupils are safe. They make sure that

all staff are suitable to work with pupils. Staff receive regular training on important issues, such as online safety, sexualised behaviour and radicalisation. They know how to identify when pupils might be at risk of harm. Leaders act appropriately when staff raise concerns. They work well with safeguarding partners for pupils who need extra help.

The safeguarding policies and procedures are in line with government guidance. These are published on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not identified or sequenced the important knowledge that pupils need to learn in a logical way. In these subjects, pupils do not gain the depth of understanding they should. This prevents pupils from building on their learning over time. Leaders must identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn in all subjects so that staff know what content pupils need to know and remember in the long term.
- Leaders' assessment systems do not enable them to pinpoint the deficits in pupils' phonic knowledge. As a result, some pupils at the early stage of reading do not receive the precise teaching and support they need to catch up quickly. Leaders must ensure that all staff identify the precise gaps in pupils' reading knowledge, so they receive the right help they need to segment and blend sounds fluently.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have sufficient oversight of some aspects of the quality of education pupils receive. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn and achieve as well as they could. Leaders at all levels should ensure that the planned improvements to the quality of education are implemented effectively in all subjects.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	113950
DfE registration number	838/6016
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10286129
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Cambian Autism Services Ltd
Chair	Farouq Sheikh
Principal	Sarah Stacey (Interim Principal)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£96,531
Telephone number	01929 422760
Website	www.cambianguroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/autism-schools/purbeck-view-school/
Email address	sarah.stacey@cambianguroup.com
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 March 2022

Information about this school

- Purbeck View School is an independent special school. The school caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include autism spectrum disorders and/or severe communication difficulties. All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan funded by two local authorities.
- The school is registered for 57 pupils between the ages of seven and 19 years old. There are currently no pupils at the school in key stage 2.
- The last standard inspection took place in March 2022. In January 2023, there was an emergency inspection.
- The children's home linked to the school was deregistered in March 2023.
- There have been significant changes to leadership of the school. A full-time interim principal took up post in April 2023 following a period of short-term and part-time interim leadership arrangements since November 2022.
- The school does not use any 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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection was brought forward following independent school standards being unmet at the emergency inspection in January 2023.
- Inspectors met with the interim principal, interim head of education, regional director and site manager to discuss aspects of the school's work. The lead inspector held a telephone call with a representative of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading and communication, mathematics, PSHE education and PE. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with the leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, talked to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation. They met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school and the single central record. Inspectors

considered how well safeguarding leaders act on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to staff about the school's safeguarding practice.

- Inspectors conducted a range of activities to confirm whether the independent school standards were met in full. This included health and safety checks of the premises, scrutiny of risk assessments and the policies in place to promote the well-being of pupils.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and responses to the staff survey. The lead inspector spoke to several parents and carers on the telephone.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023