

Inspection of Cambian Dunbroch School

Fordham Road, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7LG

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Cambian Dunbroch School is a safe and orderly place. Pupils have had a disrupted experience in their previous education. They enjoy positive relationships with staff. This, along with the calm atmosphere in the school, helps pupils stabilise. Pupils get effective help with their mental health and well-being. Pupils build up their emotional resilience. This helps them be in a better frame of mind for learning.

Pupils learn a curriculum that is well planned. However, the quality of its delivery is inconsistent. As a result, pupils do not build up what they know as well as they could. This includes for students in the sixth form.

Pupils learn to behave well. They are friendly and polite. Pupils respond to clear expectations. Daily routines, such as breakfast before lessons, help them settle. Over time, pupils' attendance and conduct improve. They get on well with each other. Any issues get resolved.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to develop their learning and interests. For example, they visit the Globe Theatre. Activities, such as cooking for staff in the Friday café and horse riding, broaden pupils' experiences. They get some help in considering their future options. However, pupils do not get enough opportunities to meet employers and providers.

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

The school has faced significant disruption to leadership and staffing since it opened in December 2022. The proprietor body is supporting the school through a period of rebuilding. However, the headteacher is new in role. Half the staff are also new. They have not had much of the training they need. This contributes towards the weak educational experience pupils receive.

The school's curriculum is carefully planned. It identifies what pupils should learn and when. Much of the intended learning is ambitious. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, successfully achieve accredited qualifications.

While this is the case, staff do not have the knowledge to implement the curriculum effectively. Leaders and staff use assessment well to check where pupils have gaps in learning. Staff have appropriate subject knowledge. They model and explain learning competently. Staff do not, though, plan learning activities that break down the learning well for pupils. In the sixth form, students can find some learning too easy. This means that, although pupils want to learn, they have moments when they struggle with engagement and motivation. They do not remember enough of their previous learning. As a result, pupils do not develop the detailed knowledge or the depth of knowledge they would hope to.

The school supports pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. In particular, leaders are skilful at helping pupils' social, emotional and mental health

(SEMH). Leaders identify needs accurately by building up an increasingly clear picture of these over time. This enables the right support to be put in place. Pupils develop the ability to understand their own needs and what will help them. Consequently, their independence grows.

Leaders prioritise reading. They create a culture where it is valued, such as staff and pupils reading at the same time. Staff are not trained in delivering phonics. Currently, this is not needed. However, leaders know the importance of phonics training and have plans to implement it.

There is a clear behaviour policy. Staff apply it well. If pupils break the rules, this gets addressed. They learn strategies to help them manage their own behaviour. Incidents of challenging behaviour in school are rare. Pupils behave well throughout the day.

The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is not put in place as well as it should be. Pupils learn about important content, for instance about the rule of law and the protected characteristics. However, the teaching of PSHE does not build carefully on what they already know. Pupils enjoy discussing issues such as healthy relationships. But the curriculum does not help them develop a deep understanding of these areas.

The school provides some experiences that help pupils to explore career choices. For example, students in the sixth form undertake valuable work experience. While this is the case, there is not a well-planned programme of advice and guidance. This means they do not have the information they need to make well-informed choices about their future options.

The proprietor body has not ensured that the independent school standards have been met. In part, this is because of the changes in leadership and staffing. These have affected the consistency of the quality of education and pupils' personal development.

The proprietor has made sure that there is an appropriate and effectively implemented safeguarding policy. Safer recruitment is carefully practised. Regular health and safety checks and risk assessment ensure the site and provision are safe for pupils. There is a suitable policy for relationships and sex education. The required information is available for parents and local authorities. The school is compliant with the Equalities Act 2010.

The proprietor body has the capacity to improve the school. It knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. The proprietor body understands, for example, that the training of new staff is essential work moving forwards. The proprietor ensures there is regular and effective oversight of provision. It has a strong sense of the importance of the school's purpose.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The quality of the delivery of the curriculum is inconsistent. Staff do not always plan learning activities that implement the curriculum intent effectively. This means pupils do not build up what they know as well as they should. Leaders should ensure staff get the training they need so they know how to put the curriculum in place in a way that supports pupils' learning better.
- There is not an effective careers programme in place. This means pupils do not receive the objective guidance and range of experiences they need to make informed decisions about their future. The school should put into place a careers programme which ensures pupils get access to the information and advice they need.
- The PSHE programme is delivered in a way that does not build up pupils' knowledge well enough over time. Pupils sometimes learn content in an ad hoc way, so when they encounter new knowledge it does not always build well on their prior learning. The school should map its delivery more clearly, especially when lessons vary from the plan, so leaders can ensure a coherent and well-planned delivery.

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	149442
DfE registration number	935/6031
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10286508
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Childcare Limited
Chair	Farouq Sheikh
Headteacher	Karen Carrington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,661
Telephone number	07501 400 422
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/residential-services/our-care-homes/mental-health-services/merida/dunbroch-school/
Email address	karen.carrington@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who have a primary SEND diagnosis relating to their SEMH. Pupils' needs may also include autism, cognitive and learning needs, specific learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social development needs, behavioural, emotional and social difficulty, communication and interaction needs, and speech and language needs. Approximately half the pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The provider caters exclusively for children looked after by the local authority. Placements are commissioned by a range of local authorities.
- The proprietor body is a private limited company. There are five directors. The company runs 22 other schools and 16 post-16 colleges nationally.
- The school has a governing body.
- The headteacher was appointed 1 September 2023.
- Half the staff were appointed 1 September 2023. At the time of the inspection, there were no qualified teachers. The school aims to appoint qualified teachers as soon as possible.
- The school does not use supply staff.
- Pupils joined the school from February 2022. The school has capacity for 22 pupils. At the time of the inspection, five were on roll.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This is the first standard inspection of the school. It was registered by the Department for Education on 5 December 2022.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 lead inspector spoke by phone with the managing director of the proprietor body, who is also the chair of governors. Inspectors met with the operations

director and regional care leader from the proprietor body. Inspectors met with the headteacher, staff and pupils.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, met with the staff who were teaching the subject, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- As part of checking compliance with the independent school standards, and evaluating other areas of provision, inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils, and scrutinised a range of policies and documents. They checked the safety and appropriateness of the school site.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, and no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kathryn Herlock

Ofsted 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(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which–
 - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school’s aim and ethos; and
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

- 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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time; and
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.

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; and
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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