

# Inspection of Cambian Devon School

Intek House, 52 Borough Road, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7DQ

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Inspection dates: 8 to 10 May 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Although many pupils have missed a lot of schooling by the time they arrive at Cambian Devon School, they adapt quickly and thrive. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties but they learn to manage their behaviour well. The school prioritises the learning and pastoral needs of each pupil. Through the curriculum, pupils learn to form strong relationships with staff and each other. The carefully balanced combination of educational and therapeutic support enables pupils to develop empathy, respect and kindness. Consequently, pupils learn in a calm environment.

Pupils relish the opportunities to learn bushcraft skills. They learn to grow and cook their own food both in the kitchen and in the wild using campfires. They develop strong navigational skills through hiking along the coast path. Pupils learn to value the natural world. Through the very well-designed curriculum, pupils' personal development is impressive.

Pupils learn about the importance of democracy, inclusion and free speech. They have bespoke opportunities to develop their knowledge of the world through volunteering. For example, pupils volunteer on the steam railway and in charity shops. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared to be citizens in modern Britain.

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

The school has clear aspirations for the social, emotional and academic success of all pupils. The school has revised the curriculum successfully to ensure that all pupils learn a breadth of subjects in sufficient depth. Pupils routinely review their prior knowledge before moving on to more complex learning. Staff check what pupils know and do not know effectively in most areas. However, assessment of pupils' knowledge in a few areas is not as sharp. In these areas, teachers do not make suitable adaptations to the teaching of the curriculum. This means pupils do not build their knowledge as well.

Pupils read well across the curriculum. For pupils who struggle with reading, the school has established an early reading programme with success. The school also supports pupils' enjoyment of reading well. However, the school acknowledges that pupils do not write as well. Some pupils struggle with spelling, handwriting and extended writing. Although the curriculum addresses these areas, teaching approaches do not support some pupils to become fluent, confident writers.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is very well designed. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, consent and e-safety. The programme is expertly adapted to address issues as they arise to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. The careers programme is impressive. Threaded through the curriculum, pupils learn about the world of work, further education and apprenticeships in great depth. Personalised programmes suited to the needs and

interests of each pupil are in place enabling pupils to make the most informed decisions about their next steps.

The school's site at Buckfastleigh supports pupils' wider learning very well, as well as enhancing their learning of core subjects such as English, mathematics and science. Pupils learn to measure wood with accuracy and to make implements for the school site. Immersed in the natural world, pupils have a breadth of well-coordinated learning opportunities. For example, pupils can participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to extend and apply the knowledge they learn at the school. Pupils learn about different faiths very well. They visit places of worship in the region. The curriculum is expertly enhanced through visits and visitors of cultural and civic importance.

Attendance has been given the highest priority by the school. Attendance is monitored and tracked closely. The school provides appropriate and timely support when issues arise. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved. Additionally, the school has reduced the number of suspensions. Pupils are provided with personalised support that ensures that the social, emotional and educational needs of each pupil are met with precision and timeliness.

Leaders ensure full compliance with the independent school standards. Staff are unanimously positive about leaders' support for their well-being and workload. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- In a few areas, the assessment of pupils' knowledge is not as precise as in other areas. Consequently, staff do not have the most accurate information with which to adapt their teaching of some areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge as well. The school should ensure that the assessment of pupils' knowledge is precise in all areas of the curriculum so that pupils can learn well in all areas.
- The teaching of writing is not as well structured as the teaching of reading. Consequently, some pupils struggle with many aspects of writing. The school should ensure a more coherent approach to the teaching of writing so that pupils are supported to write with confidence and fluency.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135803
<b>DfE registration number</b>	878/6213
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321516
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	17
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cambian Group
<b>Chair</b>	Farouq Sheikh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pamela Husbands
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£61,802
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 524537
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cambiangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-devon-school/">www.cambiangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-devon-school/</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:pamela.husbands@cambiangroup.com">pamela.husbands@cambiangroup.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 to 20 October 2022

## Information about this school

- The school provides specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, as well as for pupils with autism. All pupils have education, health and care plans. The placements are funded by Devon, Dorset, Plymouth and Cornwall local authorities.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school operates on two sites. The main school site is Cambian Devon School, 52 Borough Road, Paignton, TQ4 7DQ. The school has a second site at Cambian Devon School, Oaklands Park, Buckfastleigh, Devon, TQ11 0BW. At the second site, the school provides outdoor and vocational education. The school transports pupils between the two sites.
- The school is permitted to accept pupils between the ages of seven and 18.

## 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.

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed and continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the proprietor and the regional director of education of Cambian Group.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, PSHE, mathematics and art and design. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.

## **Inspection team**

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gavin Summerfield

His Majesty's Inspector

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