

Inspection of Cambian Hereford School

Coningsby Road, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 8LL

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 March 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Cambian Hereford School is a highly inclusive school where everyone is valued. Pupils are proud to demonstrate the school's values of teamwork and community spirit. The school is highly ambitious for its pupils. Pupils achieve well. Relationships between pupils and staff are exceptionally warm and respectful. Pupils rightly feel safe and know that teachers look after them well.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils focus on their learning well. Pupils enjoy showing their work to staff and celebrating success with merits and 'headteacher awards'. Teachers calmly support any pupil who loses concentration and successfully help them regain focus. Pupils know who to talk to about any concerns they may have.

The school places an especially strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about working together within activities. The school provides an exceptional range of visits to the community, and pupils receive extensive careers information. Pupils play a genuine role in school improvement, for instance by helping to develop the school garden. Pupils take part in enrichment clubs and activities such as roller-skating, rock climbing and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

Changes to staff roles have helped the school to improve since the last inspection. The school has raised its expectations for pupils' learning, behaviour and attendance. Positive relationships between staff, pupils, parents and carers help pupils to be confident and happy.

The curriculum maps out precisely the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn. This helps teachers to know what to teach and when to teach it. New learning builds on what has been taught before. This helps pupils to make connections with what they have learned previously. The school emphasises the importance of linking knowledge in one subject with another. For example, teachers discuss graphs in psychology using pupils' learning in mathematics.

Most staff check what pupils have learned and adapt their teaching accordingly. This enables pupils to build on what they know and can do. However, in some cases, some teachers do not adapt their teaching well enough. Pupils sometimes lack opportunities to extend their knowledge. At other times, some teachers give work that is too challenging for pupils at that point in their learning. This leads to some pupils not being able to apply their prior skills and knowledge successfully.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use detailed information about these needs to consider how the learning looks for each pupil. The school recognises the importance of reading to ensure pupils can learn the rest of the curriculum fully. Pupils who need support with reading begin learning phonics

as soon as they join the school. However, the school's programme to support pupils' reading and writing skills beyond phonics is still developing. Because of this, some pupils do not always achieve as well as they should.

The school understands the importance of frequent attendance to support pupils' learning and development as young adults. The school analyses trends in pupils' absences effectively. Although some pupils do not attend school as often as they should, attendance rates are beginning to increase. The school works closely with pupils and their families to encourage pupils to attend more often.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are at the heart of this school. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is meticulously designed and skilfully delivered. Pupils learn about online safety and healthy relationships exceptionally well. Pupils delight in the wide range of educational visits and experiences. To further develop confidence, staff and pupils performed a pantomime together. Recent visits to the library, museums and mosques helped develop pupils' detailed awareness of different cultures and traditions well.

School leaders, with the support of the proprietor body, strive to improve the school continuously. They understand how every pupil is an individual. The school is determined to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience in a nurturing environment. To this end, the school has implemented a well-thought-out professional development programme. The school also consults staff well on policy changes and considers their workload carefully, both of which staff appreciate.

The proprietor body has ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 as a suitable accessibility plan is in place.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- At times, teachers do not adapt learning in the most effective ways to support pupils to build their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. This means some pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers use information about pupils' needs and starting points to design appropriate learning activities so pupils can build knowledge securely.
- The school has not fully embedded its strategies to support pupils with weaker literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, some pupils struggle to catch up to their peers. The school should roll out its plans for literacy and numeracy interventions to enable these pupils to achieve as well as they should.

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	117048
DfE registration number	884/6010
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10342006
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Proprietor	Cambian Childcare Ltd.
Chair	Farouq Sheikh
Headteacher	Tom Clarke
Annual fees (day pupils)	£59,993
Telephone number	01568 620443
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-hereford-school
Email address	tom.clarke@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	26 to 28 April 2022

Information about this school

- Cambian Hereford School is a small independent special school that caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils are referred to the school by their local authorities.
- The school is registered to take pupils aged 11 to 19. At the time of the inspection, the school only had pupils up to the age of 16 on roll.
- The proprietor of the school is Cambian Childcare Ltd. This group operates specialist education and care settings across the country.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative provisions to support its vocational curriculum. The school uses local sports venues for physical education.
- The school's last standard inspection was in April 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.

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 any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and food technology. The inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour and attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. Inspectors also reviewed the school's website.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of

safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.

- The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the proprietor body, the headteacher and other leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils. The inspectors also talked informally to pupils, staff, parents and carers to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. The lead inspector toured the premises to check their suitability against the relevant independent school standards.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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