

Cambian Potterspury Lodge School

Address: Potterspury Lodge, NN12 7LL

Unique reference number (URN): 122136

Inspection report: 3 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Most pupils leave the school well prepared for their next steps. They learn to be more independent and to recognise and communicate what they feel, think and want. Pupils gain recognised qualifications and move on to further education or training with growing confidence and clearer aspirations. Achievement in national examinations in 2025 for pupils at the end of key stage 4 was positive.

Current pupils make clear progress from their diverse starting points. Many arrive with gaps in their earlier education, and leaders take these into account when planning the curriculum. They ensure the curriculum aligns with pupils' education, health and care plans and make regular checks on how well pupils are developing their academic, social and emotional knowledge, and skills. Leaders are continuing to refine these systems so they gain an even fuller picture of how well pupils are remembering and using what they have been taught.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders work hard to create a nurturing environment where pupils feel ready to learn. The school's culture is positive and pupils feel a strong sense of connection. The school's behaviour systems help pupils to understand their emotions with increasing independence. Staff make appropriate adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders use information well to track patterns in behaviour and act early. Any instances of discrimination or derogatory language are dealt with promptly. Staff use supportive conversations to rebuild relationships after incidents. As a result, pupils who previously struggled to participate in learning now engage more calmly in lessons. Leaders continue to refine rewards so pupils can understand and celebrate their progress in refining their behaviours.

Attendance has improved significantly, and persistent absence has reduced. Pupils who previously had extremely low attendance now attend far more regularly. Leaders work closely with families, clinical staff and external agencies to remove barriers that pupils face in attending school. Staff offer calm spaces and tailored routines so pupils can settle and feel ready for the day. Leaders also check lateness to lessons and provide tailored support to help pupils understand their difficulties in accessing different subjects. Over time, pupils arrive more promptly as their confidence grows.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is sequenced and builds appropriately across subjects and phases. Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened its primary curriculum so it links more closely to what pupils need in readiness for key stage 3. Leaders have appointed key staff, with the right expertise, to deliver this phase of education. They are now refining the sixth-form curriculum so it is equally ambitious, although this work is still at an early stage.

Staff receive training to help them meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. While teachers make checks on how well pupils recall the curriculum, and adaptations are made for pupils, sometimes these adaptations are not as closely matched as they could be. When this happens, pupils may not recall the curriculum as securely.

Staff work hard to develop pupils' confidence and interest in reading. They encourage pupils to read across curriculum subjects so they can apply their skills. Pupils, including secondary-age pupils who need extra help, receive timely support. Leaders ensure staff new to the reading programme have the knowledge they need so pupils develop increasing confidence as readers.

Inclusion

Expected standard ●

The school identifies pupils' needs well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who are disadvantaged and those known to social care. It assesses needs carefully and adapts support, timetables and interventions so pupils can take part in all aspects of school life and feel included. Leaders work well with families, social care, the local authority and external professionals.

Leaders work tirelessly to reduce the barriers that can affect pupils' learning. They ensure staff understand how to support the different SEND of the pupils they work with. Staff make additional adaptations for individual pupils, meaning support is highly personalised and effective. They make reasonable adjustments, draw on therapeutic and clinical expertise and establish routines that help pupils feel calm and prepare for learning. These actions help pupils feel secure and connected. Leaders continue to refine systems to check how well the curriculum is adapted for pupils and to understand the impact of interventions.

The school's use of alternative provision is appropriate, regularly reviewed and in the best interest of pupils. For pupils, it offers meaningful engagement and future career pathways.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard ●

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a period of uncertainty. The new leadership team has brought clarity, direction and increased capacity, which parents and carers appreciate. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what must improve. They use information with increasing precision, respond appropriately when patterns emerge and keep pupils' needs at the centre of their decisions. Staff describe a positive shift in culture and say expectations are now higher and clearer. Leaders also consider workload and wellbeing when making decisions. Staff report improved trust, clearer direction and a positive working environment.

The proprietor has established clear systems for oversight, including with regard to safeguarding, quality assurance, estates and compliance with the independent school standards. It provides regular challenge and support, and holds leaders to account for improvement and the use of resources. Decisions are made in pupils' best interests, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known to social care.

Many staff have secure subject knowledge in their area of expertise. They continue to use research and wider information to deepen their understanding, sharing this with colleagues. Leaders continue to support staff's professional learning in order to strengthen teachers' pedagogical understanding and use of assessment.

Leaders continue to develop their processes for the teaching of reading. Their actions to address these issues are precise and demonstrate the ambition needed to sustain improvement over time.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a clear and purposeful personal development programme. Pupils learn to reflect on and celebrate their identity and recognise their strengths. Staff encourage them to consider their opinions, values and experiences while respecting the views of others. Pupils explore right and wrong and discuss ethical issues in a safe and calm environment. The curriculum promotes cooperation, turn-taking and resolving disagreements. Pupils take part in activities that build social skills and help them work effectively with others. Fundamental British values are woven through discussion, celebrations and daily routines.

Pupils learn about different cultures and traditions and enjoy creative opportunities. They take part in art, music, sport, debate, enterprise and community visits, which broadens their understanding of diversity and the wider world. For example, the school has recently developed its chapel into a music area, enabling pupils with a talent for music to rehearse and perform their work.

Pupils are taught about safety, including online, healthy relationships, consent, mental health and physical wellbeing. Sensitive topics are introduced in a measured and age-appropriate way. Staff use clinical advice, safeguarding information and pupils' targets in education, health and care plans to adapt lessons so all pupils can access them.

Leaders place strong emphasis on independence, life skills and preparation for adulthood. Pupils practise real-life tasks such as ordering food, travelling in the community and managing daily routines. The programme supports disadvantaged pupils well because staff provide targeted help and personalised routines so these pupils can access life beyond school with growing confidence and develop stronger social understanding.

Careers education is becoming more structured. Older pupils complete work experience, write CVs, apply for college and receive independent guidance linked to national benchmarks. As a result, pupils gain confidence, resilience and a clearer understanding of themselves and their future choices.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

A fresh start awaits pupils when they join Potterspurty Lodge School. Parents and carers also value the new beginning the school provides and appreciate the care shown to their children. Pupils enter a calm, predictable environment where staff greet them warmly and

check in on their wellbeing. This helps them settle quickly and develop a strong sense of belonging. Pupils say they feel accepted and supported, and pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable work closely with trusted adults. They gain growing confidence in how to keep themselves safe, with staff helping them to understand risks and how to seek support, including when online.

Pupils generally behave well. Staff take the time to understand each pupil's needs and help them regulate their emotions. Pupils feel listened to and genuinely cared for. Bullying is dealt with promptly, and pupils describe the school as welcoming, with staff and peers helping them feel comfortable. This positive climate means pupils enjoy school and learning, and their behaviour and attendance improve significantly over time.

Staff work hard to understand each pupil's interests and use these to engage them in learning. They work closely with therapy and clinical teams to ensure the curriculum is delivered carefully for each pupil. At each step, staff consider pupils' strengths and their barriers to learning. As a result, pupils become more confident in managing their learning and are better able to participate successfully in lessons.

By the time pupils leave the school, many achieve recognised national qualifications. Older pupils have clear aspirations and value the guidance they receive for their next steps, with most moving on to further education or training. Leaders ensure staff have a secure understanding of pupils' starting points. This helps staff to support pupils to build on what they know and move towards their individual goals.

Next steps

- The proprietor must continue to develop opportunities for staff training. This will ensure staff feel confident in how they teach the curriculum and reading, and to put in place adaptations to learning that enable all pupils to achieve consistently well.
- Leaders should refine the post-16 curriculum, so it becomes as coherent and ambitious as the school's curriculum in earlier phases. Leaders should continue to support staff so they feel confident in delivering this developing area of the school's work.
- Leaders should continue to enhance systems for pupils to develop their self-regulation and engagement in all lessons by embedding the new rewards system so that positive learning behaviours are strengthened and sustained.

About this inspection

The chair of the proprietor body is Farooq Sheikh.

The fees currently charged are £102,773.

The school's email address is elaine.burns@cambiangroup.com.

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector undertook a site visit and also held an online call with the chair of the proprietorial board. Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans and documents related to compliance of the independent school standards.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

All pupils at Cambian Potterspurty Lodge have an education, health and care plan. These typically name autism as the primary area of need, although many pupils also have a range of social, emotional, mental health and behavioural needs.

The headteacher took up position in September 2025. The deputy headteacher has also been appointed recently.

At the time of the inspection, there were no post-16 students. Students who are above compulsory age of education study courses that are relevant to their stage of education, to prepare them for their next steps and adulthood.

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher : James Amps

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:

Shaheen Hussain, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Christine Horrocks, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 3 February 2026

Total pupils

52

School capacity

64

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

52

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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