

Chesham House

Inspection dates	10–11 June 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Pupils most often arrive at the school with low levels of attainment. Once they settle into the calm and nurturing environment of the school, they re-engage with learning and make good progress from a variety of different starting points. This represents good achievement overall.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and is at times outstanding, despite their very high levels of need. They clearly enjoy school, as reflected in their excellent levels of attendance. They say they feel safe and the majority feel school prepares them well for the next stage in their education or for the workplace.
- The quality of teaching is good because staff understand the needs of pupils well and have high expectations for their behaviour and achievement.
- Leadership and management are good. The lead teacher is clear about the school's strengths and has brought about fast and continuous improvement, as evidenced by the increased attendance of all pupils and their good achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While pupils' work is diligently marked and praised, comments made do not give pupils sufficient guidance on what they did well or how to improve further.
- A small number of current policies written centrally by the company do not accurately reflect the school's provision.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed five lessons or parts of lessons and also looked at pupils' work folders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders and support staff.
- The inspector took into account the views of four parents and carers who completed questionnaires provided by the school.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a small independent special school which meets the needs of up to six male and female pupils who have moderate learning and or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The school is registered for the age range 10 - 18 years.
- The school was registered in September 2013 and has recently become part of the Cambian group of schools. This is its first inspection.
- The majority of pupils who attend have a statement of special educational needs for their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Nearly all pupils who attend are of White British origin.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils by:
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work and feedback given identify more clearly what they have achieved and the next steps needed to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that policies that are written centrally reflect the school's provision more accurately.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement is good. This is because staff are good at identifying their needs and providing work which engages, interests and challenges them. As a result, they settle quickly to tasks set and make good progress in developing their skills in English and mathematics. This is applicable to those with special educational needs as well as the most able.
- Good progress is evident in the good quality of work in pupils' folders prepared for a range of different Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) accreditations undertaken by all pupils.
- Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and the words of one pupil summed up the views of others: 'School has helped me to enjoy learning again'. Computer-based research conducted into a wide range of topics improves pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills as well as helping to practise and improve their reading skills, bringing them closer to those expected nationally.
- The innovative, topic-based curriculum meets their needs well. For example, a topic which required pupils to research the population of each of the 32 countries competing in the Football World Cup caught the imagination of all pupils and they took part enthusiastically in their tasks. Further work on establishing the ratio of each of the different colours on national flags enabled them to use and apply their good knowledge of calculating percentages.
- Challenging tasks like these ensure that pupils' progress in mathematics is equal to that in English.
- Pupils often join the school at times other than the start of the school year. Because of the calm and well ordered environment in the classroom, they settle quickly and make equally good progress to others.
- Examples of pupils' writing for a wide variety of topics seen in pupils' ASDAN folders demonstrated their good progress and achievement from a range of starting points. The innovative way in which they track their own achievements has increased their ambition to progress even further in all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils also make good progress in science and art when they join classes led by specialist teachers at another local school. The extra challenge provided ensures all groups, including the most able, make good progress.
- Pupils' enthusiasm to learn and good progress across the curriculum ensures they are well prepared for moving on to further education or employment.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Teaching is good because staff understand the needs of pupils well and work closely as a team to ensure that each pupil makes as much progress as possible.
- Pupils' good levels of achievement are due to the high expectations of the lead teacher and teaching assistant. They set work which challenges and interests all groups including the more able.
- Effective learning took place when pupils were asked to produce a list of key facts about the country of origin of their favoured World Cup team. Pupils set to work with gusto, enjoying the competition of being the first to complete the task while improving their geographical skills.
- Staff regularly check pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding through the use of searching questions which encourages them to think hard and maintain their interest in learning. This increases their confidence in their own abilities and enables them to tackle more demanding work, increasing their achievement over time.
- The lead teacher is well organised, has good subject knowledge and makes good use of

available resources to promote pupils' good progress.

- Planning for learning takes into account the needs of all pupils. Long- and medium-term plans are of good quality and ensure pupils achieve as many qualifications and accreditations as possible in the time available to them.
- Pupils are proud of the work they produce. Displays of both past and present work enhance the learning environment and remind pupils of their good levels of achievement.
- Staff mark pupils' work diligently, using words of praise and encouragement. However, this feedback is not always specific enough for pupils to recognise what it is that they have been particularly successful at doing. Also, marking does not always give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work. As a result, pupils' progress sometimes slows.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority show polite and caring attitudes to each other both inside and outside the classroom. Their behaviour improves as they settle into the school routines and re-engage with education.
- Pupils display good attitudes to learning and quickly learn to work independently as well as together with classmates. They listen attentively and carry out tasks with confidence and enjoy taking part in a range of activities.
- Occasionally, behaviour dips. When this happens, staff calmly ensure pupils are made aware of the consequences of their choices and actions; a calm atmosphere is quickly restored and subsequent learning is rarely interrupted.
- Despite their high levels of need, pupils spoke confidently to the inspector expressing their views. The majority say they enjoy coming to school and feel the rewards and sanctions in their behaviour plans were firm but fair.
- Pupils are justifiably proud of their current 100 per cent attendance record which represents much improvement on previous attendance for some and a marked improvement for all.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Systems in place are robust and clear. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms bullying can take. They agree with staff, parents and carers that incidents are rare. This is also confirmed by school records.
- The school places good emphasis on ensuring that pupils make good gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A range of different visitors and visits out of the classroom ensure that pupils gain a good understanding of and respect for their own and other cultures, as well as a good sense of the difference between right and wrong.

Leadership and management

Good

- The leadership and management of the school are good, as evidenced by the good levels of pupils' achievement and the good quality of teaching.
- The lead teacher is very clear about the school's strengths and has a clear focus on how to bring about further improvement. In partnership with the school's proprietors, she is bringing about change at a fast pace.
- Effective procedures are in place to check on staff performance and targets are set to bring about further improvement. As a result, teaching is of good quality.
- The school provides good training opportunities for staff, which improve the quality of their work and link closely with plans in place to bring about future improvement.
- Regular checks on pupils' progress ensure that the work planned meets pupils' needs well. Planning for different areas of the curriculum is good and clear links between different subject areas enable pupils to apply their skills and knowledge effectively.
- Close links with other schools and colleges enable pupils to increase the number of subjects they can study and develop their independence through, for example, increasing opportunities for them to travel alone to different school sites.

- Pupils' understanding of right from wrong and their good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well through the school's effective behaviour policy and personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum.
- While school policies are generally of good quality, a small number of those devised centrally do not reflect the school's provision sufficiently accurately.
- The new proprietors own a large group of schools. Their continued focus on improvement and their high expectations of staff and pupils are central to the school's continuous improvement. They offer effective and knowledgeable levels of support and challenge to the lead teacher, and hold her to account for the school's performance. They manage financial resources efficiently and ensure the school is well resourced.
- Health and safety processes and procedures are monitored effectively and the proprietors ensure that safeguarding statutory requirements are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	140205
Inspection number	443032
DfE registration number	351/6002

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Group
Chair	Mike Ore
Headteacher	Vicky Heaton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

