

Cambourne Village College

Sheepfold Lane, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6FR

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The Principal and her team have been highly successful in developing a culture of high expectations. Academic success and education in its broadest sense are highly valued by the school community.
- The vision of the Chief Executive and the school's founding trust has been matched by their deployment of appropriate expertise and leadership. This has resulted in a high level of effectiveness in leadership and in teaching from the outset for this school.
- The school's local board of governors is well-informed, appropriately trained and challenges both the school's leaders and the Trust rigorously.
- Highly ambitious and capable middle leaders have been recruited to sustain the school's expansion, and they share the aspirations and expectations of senior leaders and governors. They are ensuring that achievement remains strong as the school expands.
- The progress of students is rapid and sustained, regardless of their prior attainment. Most students are already working at levels that would be typical for their age, and a significant proportion are on track to exceed these standards.
- Disadvantaged students, those with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress.
- Teaching is outstanding, and consistently effective. Teachers see no barriers to rapid progress for any student and positive relationships encourage students to realise these high aspirations.
- The school library supports learning extremely well. The resulting improvement in students' research skills has an extremely positive impact across the curriculum.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They are enthusiastic about their learning and work confidently without interruption. They are proud of their progress and this is clear in their contributions in the classroom, although occasionally less so in their written work.
- Behaviour and safety around the school is outstanding. Students are polite and courteous, and understand how their excellent conduct impacts significantly on their learning. They take good care of the school's facilities.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. Their appreciation of the school's academic work and its care for their children is unreservedly positive. The school aims to develop their engagement further through its work as a hub for adult education and the creative arts.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 30 lessons across a range of subjects in both year groups. These visits included two joint observations with senior leaders,
- They examined students’ work both in lessons and in a separate work scrutiny.
- Inspectors met with governors, Trust members, staff, students, and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation with the school’s adviser from the Department for Education also took place.
- Inspectors observed the students at work, and at informal times such as break and lunchtime.
- The inspection team considered 78 parent responses to Parent View, the online survey for parents provided by Ofsted. They also took account of additional surveys provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documentation including the school’s self-evaluation document, its improvement plan, information relating to the quality of teaching, data on the attainment and progress of students, school policies and procedures, and the school’s arrangements for safeguarding students.
- External reports from the Department for Education, external consultants and from the Trust were also reviewed.
- Inspectors analysed 46 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
Inspectors attended an assembly and observed the work of several tutor groups.

Inspection team

Anthony Sharpe, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Alison Moore

Additional Inspector

Ian Wilson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cambourne Village College was opened as a free school in September 2013 by the Comberton Academy Trust.
- The school has students in Year 7 and Year 8. It is therefore smaller than most secondary schools at present.
- The large majority of students are White British.
- The proportion of students whose first language is not English is slightly above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for students who are eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The Principal was Head of School from September 2013 and was recently appointed Principal. She is supported by the Chief Executive of the Comberton Academy Trust, who is a national leader of education (NLE).
- The school does not utilise any additional off-site provision for its students.
- Students will first take external examinations in the summer of 2018.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that students' pride in their progress is fully reflected in the presentation of their written work, in order to use this work as a resource for future learning and revision.
- Engage all parents further in the work of the school as a village college through the development of its role as a hub for community education.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal leads the school with calm authority and sensitivity. She is supported extremely well by her senior team and by senior leaders across the Trust. Together, they have established a school which has a firm sense of its context within a local tradition of village colleges, and a vision for academic excellence and personal development.
- The Trust and its Chief Executive strike a successful balance between providing effective support and enabling the school to become self-sufficient. The Trust has provided skilled leaders and teachers in order to ensure that the best possible start has been made in terms of leadership, teaching, progress and behaviour. It has also supported the appointment of new leaders and managers for this school as part of a robust strategy to ensure strong leadership and management over time.
- Senior leaders in the school and across the Trust have a clear vision to develop academic excellence. Staff fully support the aims of the school, as can be seen in the confident and consistent approach to the implementation of school policies across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders evaluate the performance of the school accurately and in detail. There is a strong emphasis on students' progress in all aspects of their evaluation of its performance. There are strong links to the school improvement plan, which clearly outlines the strategies to improve provision still further. Senior and middle leaders regularly update their views of the school's performance in all areas using the latest data. As a result, staff at all levels respond swiftly and effectively to any emerging concerns.
- Leaders at all levels make the quality of teaching a strong priority, and arrangements for the evaluation of teachers' performance reflect this. Lesson observation records demonstrate the accurate diagnosis by middle and senior leaders of where individual skills can be improved. Improvements are driven by a wide range of opportunities for continuing professional development, including conferences, international study and collaboration across schools.
- Middle leaders are highly skilled and have a relentless focus on achievement. They assess students' abilities accurately on entry, checking their judgements with other schools in the Trust and beyond. Leaders deploy additional staff and introduce specific activities to remedy any weaknesses in literacy and numeracy when students join the school.
- The deployment of additional funding for disadvantaged students is highly effective. The proportion of disadvantaged students making expected progress exceeds that of other students nationally, and the small gap which remains between these students and their peers in school is closing rapidly. The use of funding to support those who join Year 7 with lower levels of literacy and numeracy has been even more successful: all of these students rapidly catch up with the rest of their year group.
- Equality of opportunity and good relations are developed very well through lessons in religion, philosophy and ethics, and through personal and social education days, assemblies and themes of the week. Students study other faiths and cultures and relate them well to life in modern Britain. For example, in one Year 8 religion, philosophy and ethics lesson, students explored in detail whether a successful business could be run on Buddhist principles.
- Students benefit from the broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers with appropriate subject knowledge ensure full coverage of an appropriate range of subjects, delivered to a high standard. The curriculum is founded on the development of strong skills in literacy, numeracy and communication, and thus prepares students well for further education, training and employment.
- The information, advice and guidance required for students to be very well prepared later in life is an emerging strength of the school for its current Year 7 and Year 8 students. It has focused on personal qualities, such as the development of tenacity, courage, sensitivity and collaboration. As a result, students demonstrate increased capacity to reflect on their own personal development. For example, in a Year 8 religion, philosophy and ethics lesson, students explored an ancient philosophical paradox to debate

whether they had changed as individuals over time.

- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision for students is a strength of the school. Students have sensitively explored the uneven distribution of global wealth and are involved in raising funds for those who are needier than themselves. The celebration of Black History Month, visiting speakers, assemblies on mother tongues, and themed studies of race discrimination have promoted tolerance and an appreciation of diversity. Democracy has been promoted through a themed day on the general election and through the student council, which lobbies the governing body directly on issues that it feels are important, such as changes to the school uniform for the summer term. Students broaden their cultural horizons through a wide range of opportunities including the international school award, an international talent evening, and curricular opportunities such as the study of ancient Greek, Roman and Egyptian art.
- Students have access to a stimulating range of extra-curricular activities, including an overseas visit as part of the modern foreign languages provision, sports fixtures, and productions involving music and drama. Increased involvement in the creative arts is a priority for the school, and includes timetabled provision for choral singing and an increased number of instrumental music lessons.
- Parents express an overwhelming appreciation of the school's impact on the progress of their children. School surveys demonstrate strong support, but less direct involvement in the life of the school. Leaders recognise that the school's strategies to involve all parents more closely is an area for further development.
- Safeguarding arrangements within the school meet statutory requirements and are well implemented. Other agencies are involved where appropriate, and there is evidence of effective impact in the school's records.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body rigorously challenges both school leaders and the Trust itself. Governors have debated changes to the curriculum vigorously with senior leaders, and the governing body has recently assumed responsibility for performance management arrangements from the Trust.
- Governors have a precise and accurate knowledge of the school's academic performance. Although they are pleased by the current rates of progress across the curriculum, they continue to challenge all leaders to achieve as much as the best performing areas of the school. They use external reviews to confirm the validity of reports and assessments from school leaders.
- Governors are aware of their statutory obligations, and carry them out frequently and diligently. Link governors have become very knowledgeable about different aspects of the school's work, such as safeguarding and provision for students with disabilities, and those who have special educational needs. The work of these governors is scrutinised and evaluated by the governing body as a whole.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Students in both year groups exhibit high levels of enthusiasm for learning. Such high standards are consistent in all lessons.
- Students display a love of learning and value their education highly. A recent school survey showed that 97% of students felt that they were making strong progress.
- Attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. Students demonstrate determination to maintain their effort until they have mastered their learning. For example, in one Year 7 mathematics lesson, a student repeatedly returned to the same question that the teacher had set on improper fractions until he fully understood how to answer the question.
- Behaviour at more informal times is of a similarly high standard. Students relate to each other very well, and exhibit excellent social skills at break and lunchtimes. They are unfailingly polite and courteous to

staff, each other and visitors.

- School leaders keep detailed behaviour records. These records confirm the views of students that bullying is rare, and is dealt with swiftly and very effectively. Incidents of a racist or homophobic nature are even more infrequent, and similarly resolved in a timely manner.
- Students speak extremely positively about the work of their teachers and support staff. They value the impact that adults in the school make on their personal and academic development, and report this to the staff through student surveys. Examples of this work include the breakfast club that supports the development of literacy and the homework club in the library.
- Students know that their views are taken into account and this makes a strong contribution to the powerful sense of community. While students could not tell inspectors about any ways in which the school could be improved at present, they were able to point to recent changes made at their request, such as the increased range of vegetarian food available at lunchtimes.
- Students are punctual in their arrival at school, and move promptly to each lesson with a clear sense of anticipation about their learning. This has a positive impact on progress as lessons start promptly and with purpose.
- Attendance is above average and is rising. The number of students who are persistently absent is well below average. The attendance of students with disabilities and those who have special educational needs is slightly lower, but the gap is closing rapidly over time.
- The care for the school site shown by students is exemplary. There is no litter or graffiti. School equipment is similarly looked after well.
- Students' pride in their school and their learning does not always extend to the presentation of their work, in a small minority of cases. This limits the value of their work for revision and as a resource for later study.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students say that they feel very safe. Their parents almost unanimously share this view and inspectors agree that this is the case.
- Students act in a safe manner. They are very aware of the dangers of the internet and the work of the school staff in raising awareness of safety online has been extended to include parents. The impact of this work can be seen in the school's behaviour records, where few incidents relate to the misuse of social media.
- Students can calculate risk very effectively as a result of the school's work to educate them about exploitation, threats to British values and dangers to their personal safety.
- All areas of the school are seen as safe by students; the school's strong ethos and emphasis on good behaviour, combined with accessible facilities and wide corridors, result in orderly movement between classes throughout the day.
- Assemblies and tutor periods equip students to keep themselves safe in a range of different contexts: many students cycle to school and the school has provided detailed training in road safety; personal safety in the local environment has also been explored in detail.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding. As a result, progress for all groups of students across the curriculum is rapid and has been sustained since the school opened.

- Marking and assessment are strengths of teaching in this school. Teachers apply the school policy consistently, and students modify and improve their work as a result of teachers' comments. Examples seen by inspectors ranged from ensuring that graphs were more accurately labelled in mathematics to re-writing a paragraph from a more analytical standpoint in science.
- Teachers have high expectations of students. They set challenging targets in their lesson objectives and in their assessment of the resulting work that students complete. For example, students in several Year 7 lessons in science and mathematics were given additional questions as part of the teacher's assessment; these questions challenged students to think more deeply about the work recently completed and assessed, and increased their rate of progress still further.
- The subject knowledge and classroom expertise of teachers are clear to students and this increases their confidence in their work. In a Year 7 Spanish lesson, students were confident enough for the lesson to be entirely conducted in Spanish, with students assessing each other's pronunciation without being self-conscious.
- Teachers channel students' enthusiasm for learning extremely well. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, the teacher skilfully turned an inaccurate answer from a student into a learning point for the whole class, resulting in the student feeling that his answer had advanced the progress of the class as a whole.
- Activities in lessons are very carefully planned. They capture the imagination of students and ensure a strong academic focus throughout lessons. Teachers adapt their plans according to feedback from learners during the lesson. Individual activities are tailored to the previous progress or current confidence of individual students.
- Students' oral skills are very well developed by teachers. In one Year 8 history lesson there was considered debate on whether the execution of Charles I was inevitable, leading to a deepening knowledge of the political context of that historical period. In a Year 7 English lesson, students developed techniques for persuasive oratory by analysing the speech of a former prime minister.
- Numeracy and literacy are developed well across the curriculum, as was seen in a Year 7 science lesson, where students used heating and learning curves to aid their analysis of an experiment, and then wrote extensively using technical vocabulary to describe their conclusions, increasing their knowledge and understanding as a result.
- Homework is set regularly; inspectors saw particularly impressive use of homework in the work of students in a Year 8 art lesson. Students had invested significant time away from the lesson in creating work that extended the techniques developed in the lesson and then writing up an analysis in the style expected at GCSE level and beyond.
- The school library and its staff are a resource that is utilised well by subjects across the curriculum. Lessons spent developing information research skills have equipped students to question source materials critically and to locate precisely what is required for specific curriculum areas. For example, a Year 7 research project on China in geography has benefited from a structured approach devised by the librarian that guides students through the key questions that they need to ask.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed. They have relevant subject expertise and empower students to learn with confidence. Teaching assistants mirror the high expectations of teachers, and work hard to sustain and encourage the progress of those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- This school opened in September 2013 and only has Year 7 and Year 8 students at present. Therefore no external data is available on the attainment and progress of students at the school.
- Students join the school with broadly average attainment. Attainment in English was slightly lower than mathematics for the first cohort of students on entry to the school. They make rapid and sustained

progress and this is why their achievement is outstanding.

- School leaders analyse progress in great detail, and data show rapid and sustained progress across all groups. This progress was confirmed by the achievement seen by inspectors over time in books and in progress during lessons. Reviews by external consultants, together with analysis of data on reading ages on entry and at the time of the inspection, also demonstrate outstanding achievement over time.
- Almost all students in Year 8 have made strong progress over time from their starting points in mathematics, with most making similar progress in English and in science. Progress is even more rapid for many students; nearly three quarters of this year group are making more than expected progress in mathematics, and nearly half are achieving this faster rate of progress in English and science.
- Students eligible for additional support through extra funding also show accelerated progress, with all the eligible students who started school with standards that were below average having met or exceeded Level 4 by the end of their second term in the school.
- Students in Year 7 are making progress at a similarly accelerated rate. Almost three quarters of the year group have met or exceeded the nationally expected rate of progress in English, mathematics and science for the year, after just two terms.
- The progress of students who arrive with low, middle and high attainment exceeds or matches that for comparable groups on all the available external measures.
- The most-able students in both year groups demonstrate outstanding progress. All the most-able students in Year 8 are achieving above that which could be expected for their age and ability in mathematics. The very large majority of pupils are making similarly rapid progress in English, with almost all of this group at demonstrating the knowledge, skills and understanding typical for their age. These outcomes are far in excess of those of similar students nationally. The most-able students in Year 7 have made similar progress since joining the school in September.
- Disadvantaged students also make rapid progress. More than 85% have made strong progress in English and mathematics in Year 8. This proportion is only slightly below the rest of the cohort and the gap continues to close over time. The proportion of disadvantaged students and their peers making expected progress is higher than other students nationally. This rapid rate of progress is mirrored across the curriculum.
- Students with disabilities and those who have special educational needs also progress at a rapid rate. The vast majority of this small group of students made expected progress, with the progress of the remainder only slightly slower. The proportion of this group making expected progress is higher than other students nationally.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139408
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	450017

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kris Stutchbury
Principal	Claire Coates
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01954 284000
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