

Cambian Southwick Park School

Southwick Park, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 7DG

Inspection dates

20–22 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Sixth form provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- School leaders and the proprietor have not ensured that the independent school standards are met in full.
- Until recently, those responsible for leading the school have not identified and addressed the areas for improvement with urgency or rigour.
- Leaders do not have robust plans for improvement. The school development plan is out of date and does not provide the strategic direction needed to improve the school quickly.
- Leaders have not ensured that effective systems are in place to check the learning and progress of pupils.
- Changes in staffing and the leadership of the school have been a barrier to the school's improvement. Although this is now more settled, actions to improve the school are too recent to have had the necessary impact on pupils' achievement.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate and not enabling pupils to make enough progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The leadership of safeguarding is inadequate. Systems in place to investigate, record and monitor concerns are weak and lack rigour.
- Leaders do not effectively analyse patterns in pupils' behaviour to inform and improve the school's approaches to behaviour management.
- Leaders do not implement the curriculum effectively. There are inconsistencies in the planning and teaching of subjects. Often, teachers' expectations are too low and pupils do not make good progress.
- The school has not agreed on how to provide feedback to pupils, including to the most able, to help them improve their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed school leaders, including the proprietor and director of education, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders have put systems in place this term to improve the school's approach to checking pupils' learning and progress. Nonetheless, no impact can yet be seen.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, which helps to build pupils' self-confidence.
- The well-planned therapy provision makes an effective contribution to developing pupils' communication and social skills.
- Post-16 provision has benefited from a period of stability in staffing. Outcomes are improving.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - fully implement the school's newly adopted approach to planning pupils' learning to help them achieve well and make good progress
 - implement the school's approach to checking pupils' learning and progress
 - raise their expectations of what all pupils, including the most able, can achieve, in both their personal and academic development
 - agree on and implement the school's approach to providing feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve their work.
- Raise achievement and improve pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use the information they keep on pupils' learning and achievement to plan lessons which systematically build on what pupils already know, can do and understand
 - providing training for teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn effectively, especially in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers plan activities which challenge pupils to achieve well from their individual starting points in their academic and personal development.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - safeguarding procedures are rigorous and implemented consistently
 - record-keeping and monitoring of all safeguarding concerns are of the highest quality to ensure that pupils are kept safe
 - leaders check for patterns in incidents of pupils' challenging or anxious behaviours to inform whole-school approaches to behaviour management and procedures, including the use of restraint
 - leaders plan and record their actions to improve the school rapidly, with clear targets for improvement and appropriate timescales for implementation
 - leaders implement their planned cycle of monitoring to check that actions taken are making a difference to pupils' academic and personal achievement
 - leaders check the curriculum is planned and delivered effectively so that it meets the needs of all pupils, including the most able, and prepares them well for the next stage of their education
 - the proprietor and the directors of the Cambian Group rigorously hold leaders to account for the improvement of the school's performance.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively. Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a)

Ensure the written policy, plans and schemes of work:

Take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan. Paragraph 2(1)(b)(i)

Ensure that the teaching at the school is effective:

Ensure pupils acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught.

Paragraph 3(a)

Ensure the teaching at the school fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves. Paragraph 3(b)

Ensure the teaching at the school involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time. Paragraph 3(c)

Ensure the teaching at the school shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. Paragraph 3(d)

Ensure the teaching at the school demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught. Paragraph 3(e)

Ensure the teaching at the school demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress. Paragraph 3(g)

The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively, consistently meet the independent school standards, and actively promote the well-being of students. Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Over time, school leaders, the proprietor and directors of the Cambian Group have not tackled the decline in the school's performance with the urgency required. Previously, leaders did not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for immediate improvement. Although improvements have been made recently, leaders have not ensured that all independent school standards are met. This is having a negative effect on pupils' academic and personal development, as well as their welfare, health and safety.
- New leaders, appointed for the start of this academic year, have accurately identified areas of concern. However, it is too soon to see the impact of their actions, particularly in improving pupils' academic and personal achievement.
- Teachers have lacked the training, guidance and support they need to deliver high-quality lessons across a range of subjects. For example, insufficient rigour has been given to the implementation of an effective assessment system to check pupils' learning and progress, particularly in English and mathematics. Staff changes to the teaching team in recent months, and also to the board of directors, have adversely affected the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. This has resulted in significant variation in the quality of pupils' work and their outcomes.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment has not led to the improvements urgently needed. The new leadership team has drawn up a cycle of monitoring for the forthcoming year but as yet there is no evidence of how this is improving the quality of teachers' work. In addition, no teacher has been given the responsibility for leading improvements in key subjects, such as English and mathematics. As a result, teachers do not have the depth of knowledge and skills to teach these subjects successfully, thereby slowing pupils' progress across the curriculum.
- Currently, the school improvement plans are out of date. This lack of strategic planning and direction over time has impeded the school's improvement.
- The school has procedures for managing staff performance. Staff believe the feedback they receive is helping them to improve their teaching. However, due to the lack of high-quality assessment information, leaders are not able to hold teachers stringently to account for the progress their pupils make. Current leaders confirm that they need to strengthen these systems to ensure that they have a much greater impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. However, the planning and delivery of some subjects is compromised. This is because the school's agreed schemes of work do not set out how pupils' needs will be met. In addition, leaders have not monitored teachers' work sufficiently to ensure that their expectations and aspirations for the pupils are consistently high. Consequently, the quality of work and the progress pupils make are too variable and inconsistent, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The school offers pupils a range of accredited courses to gain qualifications appropriate to their abilities. Teachers receive training to be able to offer relevant vocational courses to support pupils' choices and interests. Furthermore, this work is making a positive contribution to developing pupils' social and communication skills as well as their independence.

- The proprietor and site manager ensure that the premises are safe and well maintained. The premises are of high quality, well resourced and a safe place for the pupils to learn and play.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted. Pupils learn about other faiths and British values such as democracy. For example, pupils took part in a discussion to debate the pros and cons of leaving the European Union. In addition, the school council is involved in working to improve the school grounds.

Governance

- There have been a number of changes within the Cambian Group which have contributed to the school's decline. Over time, leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards were being met in a number of significant aspects. However, the recently appointed proprietor and director of education have identified the school's shortcomings. They demonstrate a commitment and ambition to tackle these issues immediately. Nonetheless, it is very early days and the impact of their planned intentions is not yet evident. The lack of strategic direction over time has contributed to the school's decline.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leadership of safeguarding is inadequate. The inspection found that the leadership team does not rigorously and appropriately investigate all concerns when they arise. Record-keeping and monitoring systems are not robust. This gives rise to a lack of confidence in the rigour of this aspect of the school's work. The school's safeguarding policy does comply with the most recent government legislation. In addition, staff have received up-to-date training to enable them to identify and act on signs of risk or harm. This training includes information on the safe and appropriate use of physical restraint and on how to identify pupils at risk from radicalisation or child sexual exploitation. Nonetheless, leaders are not implementing the recommended guidance effectively. Consequently, the school's safeguarding culture is inadequate. The school's safeguarding policy is published on its website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Over time, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make strong enough progress in both their academic and personal development.
- Too often, teachers do not expect enough of their pupils. This is because they have not had the training and guidance they need to accurately check the learning and progress of their pupils. Consequently, work planned does not meet the needs of pupils, enabling them to achieve well.
- Teachers do not have a deep understanding of how pupils learn. Learning is not always broken down into precise, small steps, building on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Work in books confirms that this impedes the quality of work and progress pupils make, particularly in English and mathematics.

- There is currently no whole-school agreed approach for providing feedback to pupils. As a result, pupils do not receive the guidance they need to improve their work or to understand the next steps in their learning. The quality of work in English, mathematics and science books for the most able pupils is weak. In addition, the standard of handwriting and presentation is inconsistent. This results in poor-quality work and variability in pupils' learning and progress.
- The teaching of reading is not consistent. In some classes, teachers have introduced the teaching of phonics. This is helping pupils to sound out words and to read them accurately. However, this is not an agreed whole-school approach. This inconsistent teaching of reading is not helping pupils to build their knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds over time.
- Teachers use communication aids, choice boards and visual timetables effectively to ensure that pupils develop independence and understand the class routines. This ensures that they feel secure in the school environment.
- Parents and placing local authorities receive written information about their child's learning and progress. However, statements in the reports lack specific detail. This is linked to the lack of detailed assessments and accuracy of information which teachers currently hold.
- Teaching assistants develop positive relationships with the pupils, often working one to one to build their social and communication skills effectively. In addition, they manage pupils' needs sensitively to ensure that learning is not unduly disrupted.
- Teachers plan work experience in local businesses to ensure that pupils learn key skills, such as handling money, cooking and woodworking skills. These experiences are making a positive contribution to the development of pupils' social and communication skills.
- Pupils start the day together, taking part in a whole-school exercise session. The inspector observed pupils following the instructor's actions and responding appropriately to the music. This session provides a positive and calming start to the day, especially for pupils with the most anxious and challenging behaviours.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Leaders do not ensure that all concerns identified by staff are appropriately investigated and recorded. Although staff take account of the most recent government guidance, leaders do not ensure that the advice provided is rigorously acted on. Consequently, pupils' safety is not assured.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to play outside. Although some large play equipment is available for use at break and lunchtimes, little other equipment is available. As a result, this time is not used well to develop pupils' social and communication skills.
- The school teaches pupils to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. The use of information technology is appropriately monitored so that pupils are not put at risk. Teachers and staff take time to get to know their pupils. This helps them to identify pupils' anxious behaviours resulting from any upsets with friends or personal worries.

- The school builds positive links with the local community. Pupils take part in local events, such as bonfire night, and visit the local library. Pupils are encouraged to get involved in fundraising for charities, such as Children in Need and Macmillan Cancer Support. This work helps them to be more prepared for life beyond school and to develop greater independence.
- Pupils attend regularly. The school has worked successfully with pupils reluctant to come to school. Records and attendance registers confirm that attendance for most pupils is good.
- Staff provide interesting opportunities for pupils to gain work experience and learn about a range of jobs. This helps them to learn new skills in preparation for the next stage of their education. Risk assessments are in place to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety when taking part in activities away from the school premises.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- The number of restraints is reducing. Nonetheless, the school's agreed approaches are not always successful in reducing pupils' anxious behaviours.
- Leaders record behaviour incidents and incidents of physical restraint in pupils' personal files. However, pupils are not always given sufficient time to reflect on incidents which occur. This is not helping them to manage their behaviours and anxieties more effectively.
- Leaders do not analyse incidents and concerns happening in the school to spot patterns and possible triggers for anxious and challenging behaviour. As a result, leaders do not ensure that the whole-school approach to managing behaviour is of a sufficiently high quality.
- Pupils spoke to the inspector in positive terms about their school. They trust the adults who work with them, which enables staff to manage incidents of challenging behaviour appropriately. Pupils appreciate seeing their work and certificates awarded on display. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This helps pupils to build their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment due to their complex learning needs. However, as a result of a legacy of the inconsistent quality of teaching, and of weak planning of lessons and assessment systems, pupils have not had the opportunity to achieve well.
- Information kept by the school to record and check pupils' learning and progress has now been found to be largely inaccurate or unhelpful. As a result, leaders confirm that teachers have not been able to use this information successfully when planning lessons to meet individual needs. This has had an adverse impact on the outcomes pupils have made over time.
- Leaders have begun to tackle this issue and checked the starting points of all pupils this term. Teachers now have accurate information from which to evaluate pupils' learning and progress, both in their academic and personal development. However, the usefulness of this work in improving pupils' outcomes is not yet evident.

- Work in books across a range of subjects confirms that teachers' expectations vary considerably and consequently progress for current pupils is too variable. School leaders have not established whole-school approaches for teaching handwriting or for the presentation of pupils' work. As a result, the most able pupils are not being encouraged to produce work of a consistently high standard. Their work demonstrates that these pupils are not building their skills successfully over time.
- The teaching of reading is inconsistent. Teachers use different approaches as they see fit. Despite this, the most able pupils read well and enjoy reading for pleasure. They have a good understanding of the text and have learned to sound out unknown words using their knowledge of letters and sounds, where this has been taught. However, not all pupils benefit from this approach to the teaching of reading. Consequently, outcomes are variable and inconsistent across the school.
- Teachers plan for their pupils to achieve accreditation in a range of courses, appropriate for their abilities. In particular, they have received training to offer courses in social and life skills. This is preparing pupils for the next step in their planned provision. However, work in pupils' learning journals does not yet demonstrate that they are systematically acquiring the early skills in English and mathematics to enable them to reach their full potential and achieve the accreditation they are capable of.
- Therapy, such as speech and language sessions, supports pupils in developing communication and social skills. Pupils learn to express their views and choices using communication aids and information technology.

Sixth form provision

Requires improvement

- The leadership of the sixth form has lacked rigour and monitoring over time to ensure ongoing improvement. Consequently, leaders have not ensured that they have an accurate understanding of the learning and progress of each student. However, students have benefited from a stable and experienced teaching staff who demonstrate ambition and high aspirations. Staff know their students well and build positive relationships with them. This enables them to feel safe and secure and learn effectively.
- Staff plan students' destinations carefully. Some transfer to local residential provision. However, staff also organise visits from employers and offer guidance and support. In addition, they plan work experience opportunities to develop employability and the communication and social skills required in the workplace. Displays in their classroom confirm that students are being well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Staff focus on the acquisition of key English and mathematics skills to achieve appropriate qualifications. Students who started the school in the post-16 provision unable to read now tackle simple texts successfully. Also, students develop their understanding of number and money over their time in this provision.
- Students benefit from opportunities specifically on offer to the sixth form. They enjoy social time in the café at lunchtimes and take on extra responsibilities within the school. Students spoke with maturity and pride about leading the school council and the work they are doing to improve the school grounds.

School details

Unique reference number	138881
Social care unique reference number	SC458070
DfE registration number	916/6004
Inspection number	10020815

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Day special school for pupils with complex needs
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Anne Marie Carrie
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Dr Joy Davis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£108,500
Annual fees (boarders)	£208,500
Telephone number	01684 853 250
Website	www.cambiangroup.com
Email address	education@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	22–24 October 2013

Information about this school

- Cambian Southwick Park is registered as an independent special school and a children's home for 40 boys and girls aged from seven to 19 who have complex needs, including autism, severe learning disabilities and severe emotional, social and mental health difficulties. The school is owned by the Cambian Group.
- The school opened in January 2013. Nearly all pupils live in the children's home on the same site as the school. All pupils are placed by local authorities.

- The headteacher took up post in August 2016. The head of education took up post on 1 September 2016.
- There are currently 26 pupils on roll, aged eight to 19. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proprietor, who is the company representative, has responsibility for the governance of the school. The proprietor joined the school in May 2016 and has recently appointed a new director of education.
- No pupils use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons or parts of lessons and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress with the head of education. In addition, the inspector undertook a focused learning walk, visiting all classes to observe teaching and learning, scrutinising work in pupils' books and speaking with the pupils.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor, the director of education, the school's independent consultant, school leaders and teaching staff. She spoke with pupils informally throughout the inspection to seek their views.
- The inspector scrutinised records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, incidents of restraint and attendance. School policies and school documentation were also examined.
- The inspector observed the end of the school day and break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector took account of 10 staff questionnaires, three responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and three text messages from parents.

Inspection team

Catherine Leahy, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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