

# The Forum School

Shillingstone, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 0QS

## Inspection dates

13 July 2017

### Overall outcome

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraph 3, 3(h)*

- Assessment analyses prior to, and in the first 12 weeks of, placement at the school have been tightened. As a result, leaders have a clearer understanding of pupils' needs and whether or not the school can meet them. For some pupils, placements have been rightly closed as their needs were beyond those which the school can provide.
- Relationships between staff and pupils, including students in the sixth form, are strong. Teaching staff help pupils to articulate what they have done. However, they do not routinely use the opportunities to help pupils explore their emotions and feelings and the strategies that they can use to regulate their emotions.
- The number of incidents of physical intervention have fallen. Restraints are only used when the pupil is at risk of harm or poses a risk to other pupils or adults. Leaders actively monitor the use of physical intervention and take this into account when they consider pupil placements that may be at risk of closure.
- Nurture rooms are available to pupils and they make appropriate use of these. Records of use, including the time, reason and length of stay, are maintained. However, they do not indicate which individual completed the record.
- The standard in this paragraph is now met.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 6, 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- Leaders quickly updated the safeguarding and child protection policy following the inspection in December 2016. This reflects the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- The risk assessments and controls that are in place for pupils and for activities are now clear and include a range of strategies that staff can use. These were seen to be used effectively during this inspection to reduce risk and minimise the need for physical intervention.
- Staff are aware of pupils' needs and have put in place activities which promote pupils' well-being and proactively develop their living skills.

- Safer recruitment principles are followed and the single central record is maintained accurately.
- The standards in these paragraphs are now met.

#### *Paragraph 15*

- The admission register is completed and maintained accurately. Changes are tracked and effectively monitored.
- The standard in this paragraph is now met.

#### *Paragraph 16*

- The risk assessment policy is thorough and implemented consistently. The content of the risk assessments feed in to leaders' analyses of the risks and actions to prevent incidents from arising. In records seen during the inspection, the nature of the concern or risk is recorded in detail. However, they lack the same level of detail in the follow-up activities.
- The pre-placement assessment of potential pupils has been substantially strengthened. This ensures, from the initial contact, that leaders have an accurate and detailed understanding of pupils' needs. The proprietor and leaders are clear when the school will not be an appropriate placement for a potential pupil.
- Where leaders have exhausted the range of strategies to support a particular pupil, there are now strong procedures in place. These involve working with parents and the placing local authority to bring placements to a close and manage the transition to a more appropriate provision sensitively.
- The standard in this paragraph is now met.

### Part 6. Provision of information

#### *Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c), 32(2), 32(2)(b)*

- The safeguarding policy is up to date and is available on the school's section of the proprietor's website.
- The proprietor's contact details are present on the school's section of the proprietor's website.
- The standard in this paragraph is now met.

### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

#### *Paragraph 33, 33(c)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, the school's complaints procedure did not include clear timescales for handling all stages of the complaints process. School leaders have revised the policy to ensure that timescales are now indicated for all stages of the complaints procedure.
- The standard in this paragraph is now met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1)(a)–(c)*

- The proprietor has clearly communicated, through the principal, the vision and values to staff and stakeholders. This has given leaders and managers the guidance they needed to be clear about the appropriateness of placements.
- The proprietor has established a governing body for the school since the previous inspection. Currently, the proprietor chairs this group. This provides stronger accountability for leaders and managers. The proprietor is aware of the need to embed this new arrangement and strengthen further the membership of the governing body, particularly including parental involvement and local stakeholders.
- The proprietor, leaders and managers have ensured that all the standards have been met. They demonstrate the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities and ensure that the independent school standards are met.
- The standard in this paragraph is now met.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraph 3, 3(h)).
- 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(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15).
- The proprietor must ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16–16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 and, where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request (paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c), 32(2), 32(2)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint (paragraph 33, 33(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently, fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)).

## School Details

Unique reference number	116593
DfE registration number	835/6033
Inspection number	10034721

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	Independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	15
Number of part-time pupils	Nil
Proprietor	Anne-Marie Carrie
Headteacher	Jo Galloway
Annual fees (day pupils)	£79,040
Telephone number	01258 860295
Website	<a href="http://www.cambiangroup.com">www.cambiangroup.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:forum.admin@cambiangroup.com">forum.admin@cambiangroup.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	29 November to 1 December 2016

## Information about this school

- The Forum School is an independent, co-educational school for pupils who have autistic spectrum conditions and severe learning difficulties. In addition, they may have attention deficit hyperactivity conditions, Down's syndrome or other medical needs. The vast majority of pupils have severe communication difficulties.
- The school is owned by the Cambian Group, which provides specialist education and behavioural health services for children. The company aims 'to actively enable each and every one of the people in our care to achieve their personal best, however it is defined

by them or for them.'

- All pupils are entitled to receive support from the Year 7 catch-up fund.
- A very small minority of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium fund.
- The majority of pupils are White British boys.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The school's previous standard inspection was undertaken from 29 November to 1 December 2016, when the school was judged to be inadequate.
- The school is overseen by the principal, who took up post in April 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection. This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in December 2016.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the principal and senior leaders. The inspector spoke with the proprietor by telephone. He reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including policies and procedures, risk assessments, admission and attendance registers and other records maintained by school staff.
- The lead inspector also reviewed material available on the school's website.

## Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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